Roles of staff holding safety related posts

Document History
- Replaced “Heads of School, School Safety Officer and Other appointed School safety roles”
- USC Approved 21 May 2008
- Amended October 2010 (format and content changes)
- Remains in force indefinitely as it is guidance not policy.

Includes
- Executive Board
- Council
- Safety Committees
- Schools
- University Safety Office

Revised October 2010
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Document purpose and safety system policy

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Part A Section 1

The purpose of this document.

This document is intended to give University staff – especially School staff – an insight into the key safety roles, how they fit into the University’s safety management system, and where role holders can go for further information and assistance. It is hoped that this introduction document will prove a useful reference document. Core safety training courses are also available to supplement the information in this booklet.

The main sections of the document detail the specific safety roles of Senior Staff, the Safety Committees and School Staff. In addition to this there is a Safety Policy Supplement on the appointment of School Safety Staff, to assist the Schools in identifying the specialist roles that are required and how they will be fulfilled in each School.

Training courses are also available for all staff with safety roles as part of their work, and in the case of Heads of School and senior managers these courses may be externally provided or specifically provided on a one to one basis. In other cases the USO requests that staff try to use the generally provided courses (including specialist provision) as much as possible. This can be provided internally or by use of external specialists.

If you have any questions, please contact the University Safety Office.
A statement by the University Head of Safety

The University of Newcastle has, like all employers, a statutory obligation to provide a safe working environment. Our responsibility extends not only to our own staff but to all our students as well, and we now expect that all those on the University campus will understand the importance of maintaining and improving the University's safety record.

In order to ensure that the University operates safely, two parallel mechanisms are used. The first is a clear and transparent management chain, extending from the Vice-Chancellor's office to the Head of each School, within that School, to every member of staff. In one direction along this chain pass mandatory safety notices, and in the other assurances that such notices have been acted upon. More generally there is an onus on all staff to carry out their duties in a safe and responsible manner and on the Head of School and the University at large to ensure that appropriate resource is committed to provide a safe and secure infrastructure.

Critical to the operation of this system, however, is a second mechanism, the provision of safety advice within Schools. The University relies for this on members of Schools who are willing to act as School Safety Officers, Biological Safety Supervisors and Radiation Protection Supervisors, GM Safety Chairs, often with considerable administrative loads as a consequence. School Safety staff are very much the University's first line of defence against unsafe practices, and I am enormously grateful to you for agreeing to act in this capacity. I should emphasise that we are not seeking School safety professionals: the University Safety Office is staffed with highly experienced safety professionals who are always prepared to offer expert advice. However, the University firmly believes that the best standards of safety are likely to be maintained on the advice of those highly familiar with Schools and its particular demands. I would, therefore, like to welcome you as the School Safety Officer, Biological Safety Supervisor or Radiation Protection Supervisor for your School, to acknowledge our indebtedness to you, and to hope that your tenure will not be marked by too many difficulties.

Vincent Theobald-Vega
Head of Safety
Introduction

The University has adopted the joint UCEA, UUK, USHA SCOP document “University Health and Safety Management – Code of Best Practice” as the basic standard for Health and Safety Management in the University Sector. In this code the basic chain of management is defined from University Senior Executive Officers via Heads of School to Principal Investigators / researchers and Competent persons and on to the full University membership. The document also provides brief outlines of the key roles of Head of School and various other responsible persons. These have been clarified for staff at Newcastle in the guidance document “Head of School, School Safety Officer and other appointed School safety roles”. However it is the University Safety Policy (as spelt out in this supplement) that these appointments are made and that the Head of School is responsible as stated for safety issues within the School. This is not a new policy, just a clarification of the long term existing situation.

School Safety Officers are appointed by the Head of School, but the University Safety Office may veto appointment, or insist on any other suitable modifications to the appointment including specific training or the requirement for appointment of deputies for specific issues or geographical / management areas.

The School Safety Officer role is principally to advise the Head of School on all aspects of health, safety and welfare within the School. To make this task manageable there are additional appointments that can be made including; Deputy School Safety Officers, Biological Safety Supervisors, and Radiation Protection Supervisors. This role may include the management of local procedures and School self-inspection, and undertaking review of School Safety Policies and Local Rules.

Policy on appointments

The Head of School (or Institute or Service as appropriate) shall appoint a suitable person from within the School (Institute or Service) to act as “School Safety Officer” (SSO). If this is not done then the role shall be held by the Head of School. The SSO shall be provided with sufficient resources (in particular time and authority) to undertake the roles required of them. The appointment shall be notified in writing to the University Safety Office.

The Head of School shall appoint a suitable person from within the School to act as School Safety Officer. If this is not done then the role of SSO shall be held by the Head of School. The SSO shall be provided with sufficient resources (in particular time and authority) to undertake the roles required of them. The appointment shall be notified in writing to the University Safety Office.

If the University Safety Office is of the opinion that the Head of School has appointed (or proposed) a person that is not suitable for the role then the role shall revert to the Head of School and the USO will state that this is the case in writing.

In all appointments of staff to School safety roles, the competency of the staff must be suited to the roles for which they are to be appointed. This means that for the specialist roles the staff members must already be practitioners in that field. The competency of staff appointed will be improved upon by attending USO training and making use of the available guidance from the USO. If at any time the USO is concerned that an appointed member of School safety staff is not fulfilling their
role, or is not competent to fulfil the role appointed to them, the USO shall have the authority to instruct the Head of School to appoint another person.

**SSO’s and Deputy SSO’s**

The SSO will need to have sufficient understanding of the work of the school (including technical aspects) to be able to undertake basic Risk Assessment and Safety Management functions for the Head of School. Training will be available from the University Safety Office on the Safety aspects of the role. In many Schools the spread of work or technical differences in the work are sufficient to make it hard to identify a single person that can provide the suitable competencies in all fields. For this reason the Head of School may appoint additional Deputy School Safety Officers to assist in different geographical or management discipline areas within the School. Any such divisions of the School are to be clearly spelt out in writing and provided to the University Safety Office with the notification of appointment(s).

**Appointing specialists**

Where the School is engaged in work which includes exposure or potential exposure of staff or students to biological or radiation hazards the Head of School shall also appoint Biological Safety Supervisor(s) and Radiation Protection Supervisor(s) as appropriate to support the Head of School and the SSO in the management of Safety within the School.

**Additional appointment for GM work**

In the case of a School undertaking or proposing to undertake work with Genetic Modification, or, use or store Genetically Modified Organisms or other similarly controlled materials, then the Head of School must appoint a suitable local GM Safety Committee and GM Safety Chair. In the case of the School not undertaking any significant amount of GM work the Head of School may agree with another Head of School to ‘contract out’ their GM Safety Committee work to the external School within the University system. This will only be permitted with the approval of the University Biological Safety Officer.
In the case of a School undertaking or proposing to undertake work with Genetic Modification, or, use or store Genetically Modified Organisms or other similarly controlled materials, then the Head of School must appoint a suitable local GM Safety Committee and GM Safety Chair. In the case of the School not undertaking any significant amount of GM work the Head of School may agree with another Head of School to contract out their GM Safety Committee work to the external School within the University system. This will only be permitted with the approval of the University Biological Safety Officer.

**Principal Investigators**

| Safety tasks related to individual projects would normally be carried out by the Principal Investigator concerned rather than the SSO, though the latter will be in a position to offer advice or to know where such advice might be sought. |

The role of a Principle Investigator is key in developing the safety culture in the University. This is the primary duty holder for implementation of the safety systems in laboratory and field investigation situations and without these role holders performing a suitably safe management of their projects the Head of School and the University in general may find that they are open to being found in breach of their duties on Health and Safety matters.

PI’s are required to implement the School and university safety systems in the areas under their control, be it a laboratory, field station, archaeological dig, research boat, farm or any other situation. They are required to co-operate with the School Safety Officer and other duty holders (including those not otherwise mentioned in this document – such as ship’s captain) and to ensure that the people working on their project are conducting themselves in an appropriate manner, the risk assessments necessary are in place and proper records are maintained of the work in progress. In particular PI’s are also required to ensure that the research work that they are undertaking is safe (so far as is reasonably practicable) and that all necessary permits are in place before they undertake work, gather samples etc.

There is considerable assistance available in fulfilling the role from the School Safety Officer and other appointed persons as well as from the University Safety Office.

**Assessors**

The Head of School may also appoint Assessors for various key roles within the School. These roles are covered in the guidance documents on the University Safety Office website.

The Head of School may also appoint Assessors for various key roles within the School. These roles are covered in the guidance documents on the University Safety Office website, and are not subject to this Safety Policy Supplement.
Part B – Roles of staff holding safety related posts

Senior Management roles in the University safety system

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Part B Section 1

Executive Board

The Executive Board is the day to day senior management of the University and is generally responsible for the strategic management of the University. As such they are collectively and individually responsible for the safety management of the University and have specific additional sections of law and guidance that relate to them as senior managers of a large organisation. This statement expands upon the University Safety Strategy statement for the roles of the Executive Board which is as follows.

Executive Board will monitor the delivery of the strategy and provide leadership and direction for health and safety strategic issues, in particular championing health and safety issues and ensuring these matters are effectively integrated into the management of the University.

Executive Board’s key tasks are to:

- set the Strategy (following guidance from the University Safety Committee)
- ensure that health and safety matters are integrated into the University management systems
- approve major health and safety policy statements on behalf of Council
- ensure suitable and sufficient resources are allocated at a University level to provide health and safety services
- publicly report on progress to Council on a regular basis

To undertake these roles the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Safety will take the lead in developing reports and monitoring progress. The PVC for Safety will therefore also represent Executive Board on the University Safety Committee.

The specific roles of the VC and PVC(safety) are considered below.

The specific additional health and safety provisions for senior staff (equivalent to company directors) are principally covered in Sections 36 and 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (see the USO website and HSE leaflet INDG343 for more details) and the various guidance and enquiry reports including from the Institute of Directors and the Health and Safety Executive. The current versions of these can be referenced from the University Safety Office website A to Z section under “Senior Management”.

The roles of senior executive officers/Pro-Vice Chancellors/Vice-Principals are included in the USHA / UCEA guidance document “University Health and Safety Management – Code of Best Practice” as follows:

Their duties include the requirement to review the effectiveness of health and safety management and generally plan the institution’s strategy on health and safety and monitor implementation via the agencies described therein.
Part B Section 1a

**Vice Chancellor**

As the figure head of the University and holding a position which equates to the Chairman of the Board in a public company, the Vice Chancellor is effectively personally responsible for the safety management of the whole of the University. This is clearly intended to relate to strategic issues not day to day front line management matters, but it does also include being the licence holder and responsible person named in many documents and agreements with the Enforcing Authorities.

The role of Vice Chancellors/Principal is included in the USHA / UCEA guidance document “University Health and Safety Management – Code of Best Practice” as follows:

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<th>The Vice-Chancellor / Principal has overall responsibility for the health and safety measures in the university or college of higher education, and needs to ensure that there is a policy for health and safety which extends to all who may be involved in or affected by the institution’s activities. The Vice–Chancellor / Principal must ensure that arrangements for monitoring, auditing and reviewing the success or otherwise of that policy, are put in place and maintained.</th>
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University Health and Safety Management – Code of Best Practice

Part B Section 1b

**Pro-Vice Chancellor for Safety**

The PVC(Safety) is appointed within the Executive Board as the senior manager responsible for ensuring that Health and Safety issues are not omitted by the Executive Board or Council or any other senior management element in the University during their deliberations, and to also champion Health and Safety matters at a senior level.

The role of Pro-Vice Chancellors for Safety is included in the USHA / UCEA guidance document “University Health and Safety Management – Code of Best Practice” as part of the general senior management (cited in Part B Section 1 above).

Part B Section 1c

**Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors and Registrar**

These senior staff effectively hold the same responsibilities as the Vice-Chancellor but only for the Faculty that they manage. Their general responsibilities are then added to by the need to communicate with the other senior managers but are mitigated by the expectation that they should be able to reasonably rely on other senior managers fulfilling their responsibilities in their areas of responsibility.
Council

As the governing body of the University Council is required to assure it’s self that the University is managed safely. In the University Safety Strategy document the role of Council is detailed as follows:

Council is the supreme governing body of the University. It has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters at the University and ensuring good governance is practiced. It approves the safety strategy. Council’s key task is to receive and comment on the annual report and to ensure that the managerial responsibility for safety is being exercised appropriately by Executive Board.

Council will specifically appoint a ‘Lay Member for Safety’ who, working with the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Safety, shall ensure the safety strategy is achieved and good governance maintained on all health and safety matters.

Within the safety management of the University the unique role of Council is to hold the Executive to account and to ensure that the Executive Board are undertaking their health and safety role as the ultimate managers of the safety at the University, and to also hold to account the University Safety Committee and the Faculty Safety management within the University. This is mainly undertaken by the monitoring of policy and reports (in particular by the Council Appointed Member for Safety) and the questioning of the Executive on their actions and plans for safety management (in particular on the provision of resources and direction.

The role of Council may not occupy much time and may also require relatively little reporting and monitoring, but is critical to ensuring that there is an internal monitor and balance on the actions of both the Executive and the Safety Committee systems. Failures in either of these management systems could result in widespread safety management failure and substantial increases in the level of risk staff and others especially when long term plans and future development opportunities for the University are being considered.

Council appointed member for safety

To assist the Council in monitoring the Executive and University Safety Committee systems the Council appoints a lay member to provide the specific communication with and monitoring of safety systems at the University. this provides an independent assurance for Council that policy is being developed, health and safety matters are being adequately managed and sufficient resource deployed to monitor, investigate, audit and provide guidance on health and safety issues, and at all levels within the University.

The Council Appointed Member for Safety is de-facto a member of the University Safety Committee, and is expected to actively take part in the University Safety Committee meetings.
Part C – Roles of staff holding safety related posts

University Safety Committee roles in the safety system

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Committee System

There are several different types of Safety Committee both defined in law and in common practice around the country. In this University the safety committees are managed with each School or Service being able to establish a Safety Committee if they see fit (many have done so and found this to be very useful). However each Faculty is required to have a Safety Committee to provide for co-ordination and communication within the faculties on health and safety issues. These then all report to the University Safety Committee which is formally defined and which is the University statutory safety committee as defined in the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 including various modifications and additional related legislation. As a Unionised workplace this committee is provided with statutory powers, and must also include representation from the recognised Unions, for the purposes of communication and negotiation.

In order to assist the University Safety Committee with some of the more technical aspects of the roles that it has acquired there are two sub committees that act in an almost independent manner and report to the University Safety Committee. These committees cover specific technical issues relating to Biological Safety (including Genetic Modification) and Radiation Safety. Both of these areas are heavily regulated and require specific approvals and monitoring committees who’s roles are taken on by these two sub committees of the University Safety Committee.
University Safety Committee

The USHA / UCEA document “University Health and Safety Management – Code of Best Practice” states the following about the ‘Health and Safety Committee’

It is a statutory requirement that a consultative Health and Safety Committee should be constituted by the governing body of the University, and should include members having the requisite expertise that represents the various fields of University activity, and reflects the interests of all sections of the University from both the employee and student viewpoints. It is also a requirement that safety representatives nominated by the recognised trade unions should be invited to join the Committee. The Committee should report regularly and send forward its recommendations to the governing body of the University.

The University Safety Committee has the following terms of reference and constitution. The terms of reference are also available online via the University Governance website.

MEMBERSHIP

The Committee shall be composed of management and Union members, with attending members of relevant expertise.

A. Management members:

Ex officio members:

(i) The member of Executive Board responsible for health and safety
(ii) The Chairman of the Radiation Protection Sub-Committee
(iii) The Chairman of the Microbiological Hazards and Genetic Modification Safety Advisory Sub-Committee
(iv) The Director of Estates (or nominee)
(v) The Director of Accommodation and Hospitality Services (or nominee)
(vi) The Chairs of Faculty and Central Services Safety Committees

Appointed members:

(vii) A Chairman appointed by Council
(viii) A lay member appointed by Council

B. Elected members:

(ix) Two Sabbatical Officers appointed by the Union Society
(x) Three appointed by UNISON
(xi) Two each appointed by UCU and UNITE

C. Attendees:

- Routine attendance:
  - The Head of Safety
  - The University Occupational Health Practitioner
  - The University Risk Manager

- Attendance when specific issues require:
University Safety Policy Guidance

- The University Biological Safety Officer
- The University Radiation Protection Advisor
- The University Chemical Hazards Advisor
- A University Business Development Representative

- Invited attendees: (to facilitate communication between employers sharing workplaces as required under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations)
  - The Chairman (or his/her nominee) of the Dental School/Hospital Joint Health & Safety Committee
  - A Representative of the Newcastle Hospital Trust Safety Office

Appointed members in group A to hold office for three years.

Members in group B to hold office for one year.

Appointed members shall be eligible for re-appointment.

A quorum shall be not fewer than one third of the members.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

(a) To oversee and manage the co-ordination of safety policy and manage and monitor the implementation of the University Safety Strategy, to ensure the mission and strategy is delivered.

(b) To develop and maintain the safety strategy on behalf of Executive Board.

(c) To develop and monitor the action plan for strategic safety matters.

(d) To report to Executive Board on progress in achieving the safety strategy and action plan.

(e) To set, monitor and review University safety policy.

(f) To monitor how routine health and safety work is undertaken including relevant reports to enforcing authorities.

(g) To provide a consultation forum for management, staff and unions on health and safety matters.

(h) To monitor the provision of health and safety support services in the University via the University Safety Office, the Occupational Health Service and Faculty/School level provisions.

To undertake these roles the Committee will include a Council appointed independent Chair (from senior staff), a Council appointed lay member, a member of Executive Board responsible for Health and Safety and Trade Union representatives. The University Safety Committee is also supported on a day-to-day basis by the University Safety Office.
Faculty Safety Committees

These include the Central Services Safety Committee – which is the equivalent of a Faculty Safety Committee for the Services managed under the Registrar.

Each Faculty Safety Committee is recommended to establish Terms of Reference and a Constitution similar to that of the University Safety Committee, but all reports are to go to the University Safety Committee and Faculty Head, and they committee is also to receive reports from the University Safety Committee. The University Safety Office shall provide representatives to the Faculty Safety Committee on an attending basis (these may vary depending on the matters on the agenda and the staffing / workload of the USO at the time of the meetings).

Faculty Safety Committees are expected to meet three times per year – and should time these meetings so that they can provide constructive input into and feedback from the University Safety Committee meetings.

The Faculty Safety Committee is also responsible for ensuring that the Faculty Annual Safety Report is compiled from the separate School annual safety reports along with comments from the Faculty.

The Faculty Safety Committees are expected to have a core membership as follows:

- The appointed Chair (appointed by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor)
- Each School Safety Officer for the Faculty concerned
- Any of the appointed Union Safety Representatives from the University Safety Committee who wish to attend
- Students from the faculty (these may be appointed via the Students Union Society or appointed by some other method from within the Faculty)
- Representative(s) from the University Safety Office
- Representative(s) from the University Occupational Health Service
- The Chair of any relevant committee that has a strong interest in the faculty safety management (for example tenant spin-out companies within the Faculty accommodation)
- The faculty Estate Support Liaison Officer
Part D – Roles of staff holding safety related posts

Descriptions of the key staff roles in the University safety system

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  - You should have:
  - Jobs on appointment
  - You should know:
  - Routine Safety Jobs
  - Overlaps of responsibilities
  - Change of School Safety Officer
- The Role of the Biological Safety Supervisor
  - You should have:
- The Role of the School Genetic Modification Chair
  - You should have:
- The Role of the Radiation Protection Supervisor
  - You should have:
- The Role of the Principal Investigator
  - You should have:
- Job Description Statements
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- Head of School Job Description
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  - Duties of Principal Investigator
- Information for School safety role holders
  - The Occupational Health and Safety Information Service
  - Information networks
  - Training
  - Investigations
  - Dealing with Civil Claims
  - Safety funding
  - Environmental monitoring
  - Communication
Part D Section 1

Description of School Roles

In order to manage the Safety of the University each Head of School has been nominated within the University management system as being the responsible person for the safe running of their School (research Institute or Service). This onerous duty cannot be practically undertaken by one person along with all the other roles that they have to carry so the University Safety Management system has identified a set of key roles that the Head of School may appoint to undertake day to day safety management on their behalf.

Each Head of School is required to nominate a School Safety Officer (SSO) to co-ordinate the day to day running of safety issues within their school. Many schools also have Deputy School Safety Officers for different units within the School or a Deputy School Safety Officer for each building the school occupies.

In Schools that have Biological hazards present Biological Safety Supervisors are required, even if the hazards are not laboratory based. In Schools undertaking Genetic Modification, or where staff are working with Genetically Modified Organisms, then a Local GM Safety Committee and nominated GM Safety Chair will be required.

In Schools that have Radiation hazards present Radiation Protection Supervisors are required, even if the hazards are not laboratory based.

Some of these posts are required by law, whilst others are required by University Policy and practice.

There are also other Safety Roles that can be allocated by the Head of School – especially where the School Safety Officer will otherwise have an excessively large task, or where they simply want to spread the load between more staff. These are outlined below – but not covered in detail in this document.

- Display Screen Equipment Assessor
- Manual Handling Assessor
- Portable Appliance Testing Assessor
The Role of the Head of School

Heads of School usually have oversight of resources devolved from University funds. As such they have a duty not only for the application of these resources but also its safe application. The term Head of School means not only the head of each academic School but also the heads of Services Institutes etc. All these individuals should be held accountable for their performance as managers.

Heads of School should take the lead in driving the Health and Safety programme within their area of responsibility. Heads of School must demonstrate visible commitment by acting in the Job Description. The Job Description list derived from the document “University Health and Safety Management – Code of Best Practice”.

In addition to the Job Description it is important that the Head of School demonstrates personal Commitment to the Health and Safety of the School staff (and students) by accepting their own responsibility in Health and Safety, and by encouraging colleagues to do the same.

It is pertinent to remember that the role of Head of School is potentially liable to personal prosecution by the HSE under Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. This section is reproduced below in the section “a brief guide to health and safety law”. This is because as Head of School the HSE may regard the role-holder as being, in effect, a director of the University being the director in charge of the School (Service Institute etc.) concerned. It is unlikely that the HSE would extend this privilege to staff lower in the University management chain.

Finally Heads of School are also accountable to the Provosts and University Executive, for Health and Safety matters just as much as for any other management issue. This is why it is important that reports are referred to the Provost etc. along with action plans for the resolution of Health and Safety issues.
The Role of the School Safety Officer

Introduction

In general, Heads of Schools are responsible for all aspects of the health and safety of personnel within the School. (Responsibility for health and safety aspects of the fabric of the buildings rests with the Director of Estates).

School Safety Officers are appointed by the Head of School to advise on all aspects of Health and Safety within the School. The existence of the SSO post should not create an attitude of "health and safety is the School Safety Officer's problem not mine" in the mind of anyone in the School, from Head of School downwards. Such attitudes are counter-productive.

Particularly in large Schools, safety-related activities are likely to be many and varied, and not all will devolve on the SSO. Safety tasks related to individual projects would normally be carried out by the principal investigator concerned rather than the SSO, though the latter will be in a position to offer advice or to know where such advice might be sought. Heads of large Schools may also appoint additional members of staff to provide specialist advice and help in areas affected by statutory requirement, such as manual handling or visual display equipment assessment. It is essential that every Head of School has a clear management structure for Health and Safety, and that this management structure is communicated to the Provost and the University Safety Office.

The main role of the School Safety Officer is to ensure the Head of School and other colleagues and students within the School are aware of the relevant safety information for working or studying in the School.

The School Safety Officer is the adviser, the monitor, and the communicator but not the line manager. Responsibility for the management of safety issues within each School lies with the Head of School.

The production and review of risk assessments is the responsibility of the person in charge of the activity not the School Safety Officer. Risk assessment training courses are available to all staff and postgraduate students.

You should have:

- A letter or appointment from the Head of School.
- An e-mail or letter from the University Safety Office welcoming you to the position of School Safety Officer and directing you to sources of information on the Safety Office website. You will also be added to the ‘Safety’ mail base.
- A hand-over file from your predecessor. This may include the school safety policy, copies of past safety inspection reports, copies of past annual safety reports, copy correspondence etc.

Jobs on appointment

- Familiarise yourself with the papers handed over. These should tell you about your local safety arrangements.
- Read the University Safety policy and supplements. These detail safety responsibilities and University wide safety arrangements on a range of subjects. The policy can be found on the Safety Office website.
Look at the University Health and Safety Management System document. This document explains how audits, inspections, annual reports and safety committees work. This can be found on the Safety Office website.

Read the School Safety Policy. This should have been handed over by your predecessor. If this not the case, guidance on writing School Safety Policies can be found on the website.

Make sure that the safety arrangements posters are displayed and are up-to-date.

Book yourself onto the Safety Office training courses recommended for School Safety Officers. These can be found on the Safety Office website.

Arrange to meet the Safety Officer who is your initial point of contact in the University Safety Office. The contact details can be found on the Safety Office website. They will also introduce you to the University Fire Safety Officer. Depending on the activities undertaken by your School it may also be useful for you to meet the Biological Safety Supervisor and / or the Radiation Protection Supervisor respectively.

Inform colleagues in your school that you are undertaking the role of School Safety Officer and that you are the first point of contact if they have any safety queries.

You should know:

- Who the other School Safety Officers are in your building (if applicable).
- Who the Biological Safety Supervisor and Radiation Protection Supervisor are (if applicable).
- The fire arrangements for your building including who the Fire Marshals and Fire Wardens are, where the fire panel is and where the Fire Risk Assessment and other records are kept.
- The First Aid arrangements in your building including who the First Aiders are.
- How safety matters are funded.
- How to operate the "defect report" system (including the e-mail and web form options).
- How to get help in emergencies.

You should be able to find out this information from the USO website and the existing School Safety Policy. If this is not the case, please contact the University Safety Office for assistance.

Routine Safety Jobs

- Fire drills should take place every Michaelmas term. Each school needs to report they have taken place to the University Safety Office using the on-line fire reporting form. Guidance on carrying out fire drills is available on the Safety Office website.
- Portable appliance testing should generally take place on an annual basis, unless you have undertaken a Risk Assessment and identified that some items may safely be left longer or some items require more frequent testing (specific guidance is available on the USO website). A PAT testing course is available from the University Safety Office. You can choose to carry this out yourself or by someone else in your school who has attended the course. Alternatively, you can use an approved PAT testing contractor. In any case, you should oversee the arrangements to confirm the testing has taken place.
- Fume cupboard and LEV testing should take place on an annual basis. This is arranged by the Safety Office, normally in the Michaelmas term. You are asked to ensure that equipment is accessible and in a condition that will enable the testing to take place.
- Although you are not expected to carry out Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) assessments, you should monitor that they are being done and COSHH procedures are in place.
University Safety Policy Guidance

- You should make sure that Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments are undertaken either by competent assessors.
- You should oversee accident reporting within your school and, in each case, make sure that an appropriate level of investigation has been undertaken and measures put in place to prevent reoccurrence. Accident reporting and Investigation procedures are provided separately via the USO website. Training is also available from the USO on the investigation of accidents.
- If they are necessary, make sure Unattended Experiment / Equipment procedures are in place and access to laboratories is suitably controlled.
- Each School is required to undertake self-inspections. As SSO you will take an active role in this process. Further details can be found in the Health and Safety Management System documents.
- You need to follow up on any matters raised by University Safety Office (USO) or the Health and Safety Executive.
- It is essential that you keep the Head of School informed of safety issues. Some SSO’s do this by having regular meetings with the Head of School or by providing them with periodic briefings.
- You will also attend the Faculty Safety Committee which meets on a periodic basis and feed information back to colleagues.

Overlaps of responsibilities

Where different Schools share common facilities and therefore need to organise joint safety measures, the onus is on the individual Heads of Schools to evolve appropriate co-operative procedures. This is often done for them by the SSO’s for a building forming a Building Safety Committee and arranging matters of common interest via this forum.

Lists of SSO’s can be provided by the University Safety Office on request.

Change of School Safety Officer

Retiring School Safety Officers are requested to notify the University Safety Office of the date when they expect to cease to occupy the post.
The Role of the Biological Safety Supervisor

In general, your role is to advise the Head of School and all in the School on biological safety issues, and to act as the Head of School’s eyes and ears.

The Biological Safety Supervisor is the adviser, the monitor, and the communicator but not the line manager.

Responsibility for health and safety lies with line managers (e.g. the Head of School). Risk assessment is the responsibility of the person in charge of the activity not the Biological Safety Supervisor.

You should have:

- A letter of appointment from your Head of School.
- An e-mail or letter from the University Safety Office welcoming you to the position of Biological Safety Supervisor and directing you to sources of information on the Safety Office website. You will also have been added to the Safety mail base.
- A hand-over file from your predecessor. This may include the school safety policy, copies of past safety inspection reports, copies of past annual safety reports, copy correspondence etc.
The Role of the School Genetic Modification Chair

In general, your role is to advise the Head of School and all in the School on genetic modification issues, and to act as the Head of School’s eyes and ears. (The Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 2b).

The Genetic Modification Safety Chair is the adviser, the monitor, and the communicator but NOT the line manager.

Responsibility for health and safety including GM lies with line managers (e.g. the Head of School). Risk assessment is the responsibility of the person in charge of the activity not the GM Safety Chair.

All GM risk assessments carried out by members of the School must be submitted to their School GM Safety Chair for review to ensure that it is clearly and accurately written, and that the work is to be carried out with permission of the school. Only the GM Safety Committee should transmit School GM risk assessments to the University Biological Safety Officer at the University Safety Office who will then submit them to the University GM Safety Committee.

You should have:

- A letter of appointment from your Head of School.
- An e-mail or letter from the University Safety Office welcoming you to the position of School GM Safety Chair and directing you to sources of information on the Safety Office website. When the University Safety Office has been informed of your appointment you will be added to the GM Review mail list.
- A hand-over file from your predecessor. This should include the school safety policy, copies of past annual safety reports, copy correspondence etc copies of all GM risk assessments which are lawfully required to be held by the school. These are all of the GM risk assessments whether active or inactive to be held within the lawfully required period of up to 40 years after the date when permission for the project is withdrawn. This is excludes those GM risk assessments which have been correctly transferred and which were active at the time of transfer to the responsibility of other schools.
The Role of the Radiation Protection Supervisor

In general, your role is to supervise all radiation safety issues within the School, to act as the Head of School’s eyes and ears and to be the first contact for the University Radiation Protection Officer (URPO).

A Radiation Protection Supervisor (RPS) will be appointed in each School where it is necessary to designate Controlled or Supervised areas. The RPS must receive confirmation of their appointment in writing from the Head of School and a copy sent to the URPO. The person appointed must: understand the requirements of such legislation as affects the work of the department; be able to exercise the necessary supervision; and understand the precautions needed to restrict exposures.

In Schools where there are many research groups engaged in work with ionising radiation, it will be necessary to appoint several RPS’s to provide adequate supervision of all radiation areas. Each RPS appointed should have supervisory responsibility for the activities in a specified area or areas.

The RPS is responsible for ensuring that all relevant information received from the URPO is circulated to users in the department, keeping all necessary records, and keeping the URPO informed of changes in personnel engaged in radiation work within the department.

However the Radiation Protection Supervisor is the monitor, and the communicator but NOT the line manager nor the adviser.

Responsibility for health and safety lies with line managers (e.g. the Head of School). Advice must come from the URPO under guidance from the Radiation Protection Adviser.

You should have:

- A letter of appointment from your Head of School.
- A letter from the URPO welcoming you to the position of Radiation Protection Supervisor and directing you to sources of information on the Safety Office website. You will also have been added to the Radiation-Safety mail base.
- Copy of University Safety Policy on Use of Ionising Radiation.
- Been a registered radiation worker and experienced with the source of radiation used within the area of responsibility (sealed, unsealed sources, x-ray etc)
- A hand-over file from your predecessor which may contain copies of all radiation returns, stocks, equipment specifications, risk assessments, safety reports or as required for the work undertaken.
The Role of the Principal Investigator

Safety tasks related to individual projects would normally be carried out by the Principal Investigator concerned rather than the SSO, though the latter will be in a position to offer advice or to know where such advice might be sought.

The role of a Principle Investigator is key in developing the safety culture in the University. This is the primary duty holder for implementation of the safety systems in laboratory and field investigation situations and without these role holders performing a suitably safe management of their projects the Head of School and the University in general may find that they are open to being found in breach of their duties on Health and Safety matters.

PI’s are required to implement the School and university safety systems in the areas under their control, be it a laboratory, field station, archaeological dig, research boat, farm or any other situation. They are required to co-operate with the School Safety Officer and other duty holders (including those not otherwise mentioned in this document – such as ship’s captain) and to ensure that the people working on their project are conducting themselves in an appropriate manner, the risk assessments necessary are in place and proper records are maintained of the work in progress. In particular PI’s are also required to ensure that the research work that they are undertaking is safe (so far as is reasonably practicable) and that all necessary permits are in place before they undertake work, gather samples etc.

There is considerable assistance available in fulfilling the role from the School Safety Officer and other appointed persons as well as from the University Safety Office.

You should have:

- A sound knowledge of the environment that you are working in and the equipment, materials and substances (where appropriate) that are under your authority and control.
- A copy of the University and School Safety Policies relevant to the work that you undertake.
- Suitable health and safety training and competency in the areas that you require to undertake your role as PI. This includes Risk Assessment training and any specialist discipline training required.
- Handover of any health and safety information from the previous PI where projects are transferred.
Job Description Statements

Introduction

The following statements are to assist people in identifying the key elements that need to be included into job descriptions for appointed staff covering their Safety Roles. It is strongly recommended that people include reference to Safety Roles that they hold in their Job Descriptions as this will assist in identifying any additional training or resources that they require to fulfil their roles, especially when the PDP is being undertaken.

Although the following statements are not presented in the format of a Job Description statement the identification of elements of the role in list format should make it easier to identify key points and will also make it easier to clearly identify what elements apply to which person when roles are split (as with Deputy School Safety Officers).

Similar information for the various Assessors roles should be available from the University Safety Office website.
Head of School Job Description

- Establish Policy and Manage Health and Safety within the School.
  - Set local Health and Safety policy within the University Safety Policy, supplements and guidance.
  - Allocate the necessary resources – both in terms of time and money – to the appointed School safety staff.
  - Devise and implement priority plans (phased if necessary) for expenditure of finance or effort to solve problems which cannot be resolved immediately.
    - This includes an annual plan of work for Health and Safety issues.
  - Actively monitor Health and Safety performance.
    - This includes following the University Safety management system, ensuring competent internal inspections and investigations are undertaken and reporting relevant findings to the Provost, USO etc.

- Appoint necessary School safety role holders
  - Appoint a School Safety Officer.
  - Appoint Biological Safety Supervisor(s), Radiation Protection Supervisor(s) and GM Safety Chair as necessary.

- Ensure all School staff are competent, with respect to Health and Safety, for the tasks allocated.
  - Provide the necessary information, instruction and training to enable School staff to perform their roles in a safe manner, according to best practices.
  - To decide upon School arrangements to ensure that suitable stand-in staff are in place during absence of the SSO or other School safety role-holders, including identifying the training needs of such staff.

- Ensure all necessary records are kept, especially for

- Ensure the proper supervision of Students (undergraduate and postgraduate).

- Establish local Health and Safety consultative and information arrangements
  - To establish local safety committees to provide advice on safety-related matters.
  - Encourage and consult Safety Representatives (even if there is not a School Safety Committee).
  - Keep their staff informed of safety matters, and ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and control risks and that these systems are maintained and reviewed regularly.
School Safety Officer Job Description

Duties of School Safety Officers

- The SSO shall be responsible to the Head of the School. The Head of School may delegate executive authority to the SSO to act on his/her behalf on securing adherence by all members of staff to the University and School codes of practice. In matters of urgency, the SSO may assume executive authority in preventing actions that pose a serious risk to health and safety: indeed, any member of academic staff has authority to act under these circumstances.

- The aim of the SSO is to try to prevent the occurrence of accidents which may produce damage to persons or property in his/her area.

- SSOs should conduct or co-ordinate the regular internal safety inspections required by the University Safety Policy.

- SSOs should ensure that the precautions against fire in their areas are adequate and that those working in that area are well rehearsed in the action to be taken in case of fire.
  - In particular, SSOs should conduct fire drills and ensure that sufficient fire wardens are appointed and trained as appropriate.
  - Where buildings are shared by a number of Schools, the following arrangements for fire drills shall apply, unless the Heads of Schools concerned specify otherwise:
    - SSOs in the building shall meet once a year to discuss issues of common concern, and appoint one of their number to co-ordinate the drill during that year. This function should rotate among all the SSOs concerned, thereby ensuring that the experience is spread across the group.

- SSOs should discuss potentially dangerous processes and operations with workers in their area and should obtain their co-operation in reducing them as far as possible. They must inform the Head of School in writing of remaining hazards. (Responsibilities for carrying out risk assessment lie with the member of staff in control of the operation).

- SSOs should familiarise themselves with any statutory or University regulations which would normally be applicable. They should ensure that the regulations are complied with as far as possible, and must inform the Head of School in writing in cases where this is not done.

- SSOs should periodically inspect the accident returns of the School, investigate where appropriate, and take appropriate action to achieve safe working and prevent recurrences.

- SSOs should recommend to the Head of the School any changes necessary to avoid hazards; the responsibility for implementing such recommendations rests with the Head of the School. In particular the SSO should advise the Head of School in the formulation and review of the School Safety Policy and procedures.

- SSOs should make members of the School aware of possible hazards by distribution and circulation of safety information and by appropriate publicity, e.g. circulars, posters, etc.

- SSOs should also co-ordinate their activities with the University Safety Officer, the Radiation Protection Officer and other SSOs as appropriate.
Biological Safety Supervisors Job Description

- The ultimate responsibility for health and safety rests with the Head of the School. The role of the Biological Safety Supervisor (BSS) is to assist the Head of the School in ensuring that the legal requirements and current University Codes of Practice, appropriate to the organisms being used for teaching, research and genetic modification are implemented.
- It is the responsibility of all supervisors and managers working with organisms or their products or practising genetic modification to ensure:
  - That they are conversant with the appropriate Regulations and Codes, and
  - That they are satisfied that their staff and students are competent in the practice of sound and safe microbiological techniques.
  
The BSS exercises oversight of these requirements and offers guidance and assistance.

- Register of Staff and Micro-organisms
  - The BSS shall maintain registers of all staff in the School whose work involves the use of or contact with micro-organisms and their products in Hazard Groups 2 and 3. (Use of Hazard Group 4 is not permitted).
  - The BSS shall also maintain a register of micro-organisms in Hazard Groups 2 and 3 which are stored and / or used in the School.
  - A central record of higher-risk usage and storage is maintained by Safety Office: this is operated by a web-based reporting system (i.e. reporting prior to obtaining). The BSS should seek to ensure that all members of the School are aware of this system and operate it conscientiously and co-operate with Safety Office in conducting any trawls etc. to check that reporting is complete.

- Unwanted Biological Material (e.g. redundant samples)
  - The BSS shall co-ordinate periodic reviews of materials in store to ensure that unwanted material is disposed of and containers and labels remain secure.

- The BSS shall compile (in the format provided) such information on biological work as may be required by the Health & Safety Executive via the USO.

- Accident Procedures, Investigation and Reporting
  - Biological Safety Supervisors shall be responsible for investigating and reporting to the Head of School, in writing if necessary, upon any accident involving micro-organisms or their products or the practice of genetic modification, within their Schools.
  - The BSS should also ensure that the standard University accident report form is completed, sending a copy of the report to the University Safety Officer and the University Biological Safety Officer. In many cases the accident report form will be a sufficient written report.
  - In the event of injury to personnel, the University Occupational Health Practitioner should be informed (this can be done via the USO).
  - BSS’s should be familiar with the relevant Emergency Procedures.

- Equipment – The BSS should exercise oversight of records of inspections of safety equipment such as autoclaves and microbiological safety cabinets.

- The BSS should co-operate with the Radiation Protection Officer and School Safety Officer within his / her School on matters of safety of mutual concern.

- The BSS should maintain a close liaison with the University Biological Safety Officer.
Part D Section 2d

Genetic Modification Safety Chair Job Description

- The ultimate responsibility for health and safety rests with the Head of the School. The role of the Genetic Modification Safety Chair is to assist the Head of the School or Unit in ensuring that the legal requirements and current University Codes of Practice, appropriate to the genetic modification materials being used for teaching and research are implemented.

- It is the responsibility of all supervisors and managers working with genetically modified materials or their products or practising genetic modification to ensure:
  - That they are conversant with the appropriate Regulations and Codes, and
  - That they are satisfied that their staff and students are competent in the practice of sound and safe microbiological techniques.

The School GM Safety Chair should exercise oversight of these requirements and offer guidance and assistance.

- School GM Risk Assessment applications
  - It is the responsibility of the School GM Safety Chair to be the sole route of contact with the University Biological Safety Officer for referring school GM risk assessment to the University GM Safety Committee.
  - All GM risk assessments carried out by members of the School must be submitted to their School GM Safety Chair for review to ensure that it is clearly and accurately written, and that the work is to be carried out with permission of the school.
  - The School GM Safety Chair should refer satisfactory GM risk assessments to the UBSO who will then submit them to the University GM Safety Committee.

- Records
  - The GM Safety Chair shall maintain a register of all staff in the School whose work involves the use of or contact with GM materials and their products as defined by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification.
  - The GM Safety Chair should maintain and exercise oversight of records of GM risk assessments of all GM work carried out in their School whether active, inactive or withdrawn as required by the Health & Safety Executive.
  - A central record of GM projects and approvals is maintained by Safety Office: this system is accessed by a mail list system (i.e. applying and obtaining specific permission prior to carrying out any work). The GM Safety Chair should seek to ensure that all members of the School are aware of this system and operate it conscientiously and co-operate with USO in conducting any trawls etc. to check that reporting is complete.
  - The GM Safety Chair shall compile (upon request in the format provided) such information on GM work as may be required by the Health & Safety Executive via the USO.

- Co-operation
  - The GM Safety Chair should co-operate with the Biological Safety Supervisor, Radiation Protection Officer and / or School Safety Officer within his / her School on matters of safety of mutual concern.

- The GM Safety Chair should maintain a close liaison with the University Biological Safety Officer.
Radiation Protection Supervisor Job Description

- To co-operate at all times with the University Radiation Protection Officer (URPO) and his/her staff, in the interest of radiation safety, and to ensure that all relevant information received from the URPO is circulated to users within the department.
- To assist staff and students under his/her control on all matters connected with radiation safety.
- To keep an up-to-date list of all radiation workers for whom he/she is responsible and to inform the URPO of all additions before work with ionising radiations commences, and of any deletions.
- To satisfy him/herself, in conjunction with the relevant project supervisor, that workers are familiar with the Local Rules, signs etc. that all procedures followed are as safe as possible. To assess what training is needed prior to commencement of work with ionising radiations, and ensure that each worker receives sufficient training to enable them to work safely without placing either themselves or others at risk. Training should include specific practical experience provided within the department.
- To ensure that all female radiation workers are made fully aware of the dangers to the foetus from ionising radiations in early pregnancy. To recommend that, should the situation arise, they inform their employer as soon as possible so that steps may be taken to ensure that they work in safe conditions for the remainder of their pregnancy.
- To draw up Systems of Work, in conjunction with the Radiation Protection Adviser (RPA) and the URPO, for all Controlled Areas for which he/she is responsible. To provide, where necessary, specific local rules/procedures for use within the department. e.g. operating instructions for a specific piece of equipment. To review regularly both the designation of Supervised Areas and the use of radiation warning signs, and make any necessary changes.
- To ensure that all projects involving the use of radioisotopes are registered with URPO.
- To deal with, and keep a record of, accidents, and take steps to avoid their recurrence where possible. To report any such accidents to the Head of School and the URPO as soon as possible, using an Accident Report Form.
- To ensure regular monitoring for contamination and radiation hazards and to record all results, even when nothing is detected. To ensure that any areas of contamination are cleaned immediately by a suitable method, with advice and/or assistance from the URPO when necessary.
- To be responsible for the ordering of all radioactive substances through the URPO and to inform the URPO immediately if any other radionuclides are brought directly into the School. The RPS is additionally responsible for ensuring that the departmental quotas for stock and disposals are never exceeded, unless special permission has been obtained in advance from the URPO. Any loss of radioactive material must be reported immediately.
- To ensure that all radioactive materials are clearly labelled and kept in a suitable locked store when not in use. To check stocks of isotopes regularly and dispose of all unwanted materials in accordance with the authorisation for disposal.
- To keep records of all sealed and unsealed radiation sources with their date of acquisition and disposal. To send promptly to the URPO at the end of each quarter, details of all acquisitions and disposals for the period, in an approved format. The method of disposal (e.g. sink, bin etc.) should always be indicated.
- To ensure that any radioactive materials moved between departments are adequately labelled and in a suitable container to prevent spillage. To ensure that any radioactive materials permanently transferred to or from another department are shown as such on
the relevant stock or disposal records. This applies to both the schools / laboratories concerned.

- To keep records of use of any Mobile Sources (e.g. moisture probes), giving details of date and time used, together with name of user and destination.
- To ensure that any X-ray equipment is kept in good working order and that all safety interlocks, warning lights etc. are functioning.
- To check that, prior to any maintenance work being carried out in a Controlled area or on any equipment or plant which could involve a potential radiation hazard such as fume cupboards, ventilation systems, drains etc., all areas and equipment are free from significant radiation / contamination, and to issue a signed Permit to Work to the relevant maintenance staff before any such work commences.
- To carry out regular departmental self-inspections. To report any matters arising from the inspection or any other relevant problems/incidents to the Head of School and, where appropriate, the URPO.
- To establish operational procedures so that the radiation exposure of each worker is kept as low as is reasonably practicable.
- To ensure that prior risk assessments are carried out.
- To be a member of the Radiation Protection Sub-committee and be a member of the Safety-Radiation mail base.

More detail can be found in the Local Rules documents on the University Safety Office website Radiation pages which is on the USO website.

Part D Section 2f

**Principal Investigator Job Description**

**Duties of Principal Investigator**

- To undertake (or ensure are undertaken) all risk assessments necessary for the work of their investigations.
- To manage the investigations (including laboratory space) so as to ensure that risk assessments and other health and safety requirements are complied with.
- To document the health and safety matters in their control as required by policy and procedure of the University.
- To ensure all substances and equipment used in their investigations are appropriate, used by people who are competent to use them, and are suitably maintained.
- To seek advice and support as necessary.
**Information for School safety role holders**

The University Safety Office provides a large amount of information on the USO website. This is maintained in such a way that all University Staff will be able to access all the information that they need for their work. Some parts of the site are being protected by password entry. This is allocated individually to the staff member concerned, and will permit them into those areas that they need for the roles that they have been allocated. If they have roles that have not been notified to the USO then they may not be able to access all the information they require.

The USO website address is www.safety.ncl.ac.uk

**The Occupational Health and Safety Information Service**

The USO and Library websites provides access to the Occupational Health and Safety Information Service (OHSIS) website. This is a key tool for accessing all the HSE published guidance, many relevant British Standards and a wide range of other safety related material. To access it you need to use your Athens passwords or contact the USO for a general password.

There is help on the Library website at www.ncl.ac.uk/library/pdf/ohsis.pdf

**Information networks**

There is a wealth of health and safety information available to you as School Safety role holder. Much of this information is accessible via the Safety Office web site.

From time to time the University Safety Office sends out information in the form of a USO circular asking you to act on a particular subject. These are all distributed electronically via the Safety Mail list and back issues that are still current are also maintained on the USO website.

New safety role holders are added to various mail lists by the USO. Others may also join the USO lists by application to the USO.

**Training**

There are a range of safety training courses available to all staff and postgraduate students. Some of these are delivered in-house whilst external consultants are brought in for others. It is important that you attend all the appropriate courses to gain a broad understanding of the health and safety issues affecting your work.

Most safety courses are provided free of charge to Schools except for those where a consultant delivers a specialist course. In this case, the School will be charged a pre-determined amount to cover the cost of the course. Details of all the courses available can be found on the safety office website.

Most safety training provided by the University Safety Office is provided free of charge, however, a charge is levied if a place is booked and then the attendee does not attend or cancel with sufficient notice to the USO.

**Investigations**

It is important that all accidents are reported to the University Safety Office as soon as possible to enable statutory reporting to be carried out where applicable. The University has an on-line accident
report form. This form and accompanying guidance can be found on the Safety Office website. Safety staff will identify those accidents reportable to the enforcement authorities. All accidents will need to be investigated on some level. In many cases, this may be merely completing the form thoroughly and saying what action has been taken to prevent a similar accident happening. It may be the School Safety Officer and / or someone from the University Safety Office investigates depending on the severity of the accident. In some case accidents may be investigated by the University’s insurers or by an enforcing body such as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Everyone has a duty to co-operate with these investigations.

Dealing with Civil Claims

When dealing with Civil Claims it is extremely important to keep within set time limits and protocols. In practice this means:

- Notifying the University Insurance Office as soon as possible. They will handle the claim on behalf of the University. Under no circumstances should anyone from the school reply direct to any correspondence.
- The School will need to demonstrate that it has adequate records of safe systems of work.

For further guidance please refer to the USO website and the Finance Office websites.

Safety funding

The Estates Office fund basic repair and maintenance issues in University buildings. However the Schools will be liable for the maintenance and repair of their equipment and any School services. The University Safety Office have no funds available to subsidise Schools in any way. However the USO do operate several schemes where lower prices are achieved by bulking together different jobs, such as the annual inspection and testing of LEV, Fume Cupboards and Microbiological Safety Cabinets. For further information about these schemes contact the USO.

Environmental monitoring

Schools are required to arrange for any environmental monitoring (e.g. testing for chemical fumes etc.) however the University Safety Office can offer assistance in selection of contractors and may also be able to offer assistance in undertaking or interpreting results of monitoring. The exception is for asbestos monitoring and testing which is to be undertaken solely via the University Estate Support Service.

Communication

The School Safety Officer is an essential element, both for communication between the School and the University Safety Office, the Estates Office, and external enforcing authorities (normally via the USO) and for communication within the School.

Health and safety notice boards are a useful element tool in supporting internal communication, provided they are up-to-date and uncluttered. However a notice board or internal web site can never be considered as substitutes for adequate consultative arrangements within Schools.
Part E – Roles of staff holding safety related posts

University Safety Office elements of the University safety system

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Part E Section 1

Purpose of the University Safety Office

The University Safety Office is the Universities Competent Health and Safety advice – as required by law and in the USHA / UCEA document “University Health and Safety Management – Code of Best Practice”. It is a central service but is managed in a very independent manner with responsibilities to all parts of the University. The formal definition of the role of the USO is as follows:

We aim to deliver a comprehensive proactive quality Safety Service to the University as a whole, including raising awareness and engendering appropriate behaviours and attitudes to occupational health and safety. These provisions cover advice, training, policy, auditing, monitoring, permissioning and investigation for staff, students, contractors and visitors to the University. The USO is also promoting best practice within the University.

Another way of explaining the roles of the USO is to regard the USO as ‘the internal mirror of the external Enforcing Authorities’. In other words the USO is there to BOTH advise and enforce on matters of health and safety across the whole of the University.
Key roles within the University Safety Office

The following are the key roles that the University Safety Office staff hold within the USO. These roles are much more complex and the individual job descriptions (not reproduced here) are long because of the sometimes complex matters that need to be covered. Below are the more important points that people may find useful in understanding the workings of the USO.

Head of Safety

This is a single post for an experienced safety professional (expected to have at least 10 years experience in complex safety environments prior to appointment) who acts as the lead professional in the team and also as the team / service manager.

This individual is expected to be able to both advise on a very wide range of health and safety issues within the University and also able to deal with the external Enforcing Authorities, able to both provide competent support for the authorities when they are undertaking investigations and simultaneously defend the University and the staff / students of the University from any unwarranted actions or enforcement by the authorities (provided that this is appropriate). This means that this professional needs to be free to take judgements about the way that the USO and University undertake action in any case as well as to decide on any immediate protective or remedial actions that need to be undertaken.

This individual must also have the experience to be able to take decisions in the case of ‘hot emergencies’ where the University is implementing an emergency plan, and to simultaneously collect the relevant evidence to enable proper investigation into the causes of the emergency and the manner that it was handled. For example one of the specific emergency roles held is to be a bomb co-ordinator, in charge of the University response to bomb threats.

University Safety Officer

These staff are all expected to be professional safety officers of various degrees of experience. The main University Safety Officer (who also acts as the deputy to the Head of Safety) is expected to have at least five years of prior experience of professional health and safety practice in a complex environment and will also be expected to deputise on many of the other additional roles of the Head of Safety. Assistant university Safety Officers will generally have less experience, or experience from a narrower range of work.

University Biological Safety Officer

This post is a specialist appointment for a person with substantial experience of biological safety matters, including practical work in high containment level laboratories. As an expert specialist they are not required to also be a competent person in all other areas of health and safety but this is highly desirable.

University Radiation Protection Advisor

This post is a specialist appointment for a person with substantial experience of radiation safety matters, including practical work. As an expert specialist they are not required to also be a competent person in all other areas of health and safety but this is highly desirable.
Because of the additional workload of providing external services and new research areas involving substantial radiation protection elements the University Radiation Protection Advisor is assisted by Assistant Radiation Protection Officer. The experience levels required for this role are less but it is important that ultimately any assistants appointed are able to provide cover for absences and to undertake the full range of work of the Radiation Protection Service.

**University Fire Safety Officer**

This post is a specialist appointment for a person with substantial experience of fire safety matters, preferably also including practical experience. As an expert specialist they are not required to also be a competent person in all other areas of health and safety but this is highly desirable.

The main part of the role is to advise on fire safety precautions for life safety and for the protection of structures. Historically the University only provided fire safety advice for life safety matters, and this has left some substantial issues inadequately covered. The consequence for this is not a dangerous University but an organisation where small fires may have disproportionately large effects on the business continuity of the University. As a result there has been (and will continue to be) a substantial change in the advice provided on fire safety so as to additionally protect structures and peoples work, not only effect life safety.

**University Safety Office Administrator**

Without significant administrative support the USO would not be able to operate many of the services for the University. This includes considerable amounts of technical data processing and reporting, including identifying all incidents that need to be reported to the Enforcing Authorities, and ensuring that suitable materials and information is collected, collated and provided in such reports. The administrative roles in the USO are not general administrative roles and some health and safety experience and qualification is highly desirable.
Additional Services from the USO

Annual Testing Services

Annual testing of biological safety cabinets, annual testing of local exhaust ventilation and fume cupboards where contracted out. This service can be opted into by Schools by contacting the University Safety Office Manager on 6274. There are charges which are negotiated based on the volume of work. As a result we get much lower prices for the services than Schools will normally be able to obtain on their own.

Portable Appliance Tester and Anemometer:

Portable Appliance Testers and Anemometers can be borrowed from the Safety Office by anyone who can demonstrate they are competent to use this equipment. Please check on availability of the equipment in advance by calling the University Safety Office Manager on 6274.