

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY

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Summary: Towards Zero

The University of Bristol has seen significant and comprehensive change in health and safety management in recent years. The outcome has been a continual reduction in the rate of accidents that must be reported to the authorities and in the rate of accidents of all type, coupled with year on year improvements to the outcome of health and safety audits. Up to this point the existing health and safety systems have served the university well but a refreshing of the purpose and revision of the approach is required and this paper and its appendices set out a proposed strategy and plan of work to maintain the momentum of change.

Members of Council and the university's executive have been engaged in a healthy debate on defining an appropriate performance target for health and safety at the university and it is clear that there is a unified ambition for the highest standards of health and safety. That ambition is embedded into the university's ethos through the *Positive Working @ Bristol* activity which aims for a working environment that is productive, rewarding, enjoyable and healthy.

In theory this should be able to be communicated as a numerical target, and if so there can be little justification for setting anything other than a target of zero preventable accidents - to do otherwise would appear to tolerate accidents. However, for a target of zero to be achieved then risk must be eliminated, for eventually a risk will be realised. But it is not the ambition of the legislators for a risk-free working environment and neither is it an aspiration that the university wishes to pursue, therefore a target of zero accidents is inappropriate.

Instead, it is proposed to aim for an enabling and invigorating approach – not one where risk is ignored but where risks are identified and approached with reasonable and proportionate precautions; where the university embarks on the most hazardous of its activities with the assurance that the arrangements for managing the risk are robust, well considered and able to withstand scrutiny; and where the university is confident and fluent in the language of risk. It is the systematic and methodical control of risk through a process of hazard identification, risk assessment and appropriate, proportionate arrangements that is the focus. This approach implements the obligations of both the legislative and moral frameworks, it embraces a proactive methodology of health and safety management, and results in a process of continual improvement out of which flows an aspiration for zero reportable accidents: Towards Zero.

Position Statement

The foundation of an excellent health and safety management system has already been created and this provides a strong base on which to build. Attributes of the system include:

- a programme of health and safety audits which has helped to mould a consistent but bespoke set of arrangements for the management of health and safety in the majority of schools and divisions;
- feedback and monitoring mechanisms that are effective in securing action and intervention from more senior levels of management and provide good governance oversight from Council;
- a highly qualified and well-resourced team in Safety and Health Services that provide advice, influence and support across the university.

The health and safety management system has resulted in a continually improving accident rate, fewer reportable accidents and year-on-year improvements in the outcome of health and safety audits.

However, there is always room for improvement and the risk inherent in the work of the university does result in accidents and incidents. In recent months it is reassuring that the majority of the issues that S&HS have been addressing have been identified proactively e.g. poor chemical storage has been identified from improved premises inspections and issues in schools and divisions have been identified through audit. But elevated risks remain and although a programme of interventions is in place there remains the potential for elevated risk to be realised.

The broad recognition of the need for good health and safety management systems and the solid foundation of compliance, combined with a common desire to keep improving the overall system, offers the opportunity to progress with a more collaborative approach. There is a desire from within faculties and divisions to be the best they can be and scope for working in partnership to achieve that outcome. The table below therefore summarises the potential for improvement of the current arrangements, which in turn leads to the definition of the plan of work to address them.

Where we are now	Where we want to get to
In some areas there is a poor response and long timescales to addressing identified health and safety issues.	A greater sense of urgency in responding to issues and a systematic process of monitoring remedial action, including action to take should managers fail to respond adequately or with sufficient haste.

The majority of schools and services have a good documented system in place for managing health and safety.	Continuation of H&S management framework, augmented by greater scrutiny of the application of those procedures.
Audit system established.	Procedural approach developed to incorporate a more challenging and risk-based examination of workplace standards.
Systems of escalation and monitoring to senior management and through the committee framework are defined.	Managers understand and implement their role in securing change in response to performance reports.
Under-reporting of accidents.	Culture of prompt reporting of all incidents, informed by an understanding of the purpose of preventing recurrence.
H&S performance is not a prominent component of performance assessment.	H&S performance to form part of management objectives and performance.
Poor standards of housekeeping, control of workplaces can be overlooked.	Workplaces and controls efficient, controlled, safe and professional.
Good range of training opportunities offered but take up is poor.	Systematic training needs analysis undertaken to identify needs and that training is delivered.

Outline Plan of Work

The resultant plan of work is included in an appendix to this paper but can be distilled down into 6 key areas;

1. Engagement
Working in support and in partnership with faculties and divisions to a common purpose in which the benefits of an effective and efficient health and safety management system are well communicated, understood and trusted and provide demonstrable evidence of added value to the academic endeavour.
2. Training
All staff are competent and conversant with how to successfully fulfil their role, backed up with sufficient technical knowledge.
3. Identification and escalation of risk
A robust system for risk assessment is in place for all hazardous activities, suitable and sufficient control measures are in place, key risks are escalated

to an appropriate level of management and decisions taken to accept risks are made at an appropriate level. The introduction of a health and safety risk register is seen as a vital tool to communicate and evaluate that risk.

4. Performance monitoring

At all levels in the organisation, and from S&HS centrally, there will be arrangements for monitoring health and safety performance and a means of reacting and learning from the outcomes of that monitoring.

5. Accident and incident reporting

Data gathering through accidents and incidents, in particular through near-miss reporting, is vital in recognising and interpreting the level of risk in the organisation and the potential opportunities for improvement. The use of technological solutions for easier reporting and data gathering is essential.

6. Auditing

A revised system of audits will be introduced that retains the oversight of health and safety procedures but introduces a deeper analysis of how well those procedures are put into practice.

Monitoring Implementation

The outline plan of work above has been developed into a more detailed plan as an appendix to this paper. Progress against this plan will be monitored by the Director of Health and Safety and Director of Human Resources, and will be overseen by the Executive Health and Safety Group and the Personnel, Equality and Health & Safety Committee.

Equality Analysis

This strategy has been subject to a consideration of the effects in equality and no adverse impact was identified on grounds of gender, age, race or disability.

Health and Safety Plan of Work

Theme	Objective	Action	Outcome	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Policy	Define and publish a Mission Statement	Council and Executive to agree a mission statement	Clear, unambiguous statement of intent providing leadership for health and safety from the top of the organisation	July 2015		
	Publish a Health and Safety Policy	Publish a H&S policy statement	Defined performance objectives will be endorsed by University Council.	July 2015		
Organisation	Clearly define all roles and responsibilities	Revise "University of Bristol Roles, Organisation & Responsibilities" document	Clear understanding by all of roles and responsibilities, with re-approval by Council, communicated and understood by staff	July 2015		
Planning and Setting Standards	Risk assessments will be in place for every hazardous activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revise the risk assessment guidance and templates 2. RA training mandatory for all staff 3. Utilise central risk register as the basis for a system for the monitoring, supervision and reporting arrangements for oversight of RA 4. Create, publish and maintain a register of legislation to inform the risk assessment process 	Systematic and comprehensive legal compliance and risk management process in place.	1. Aug 2015 4. Dec 2014	3. Aug 2016	2. Aug 2017
	H&S policies will be comprehensive and maintained up to date	Identify the full list of H&S policies required, create those policies and maintain them.		Dec 2014	Review annually	Review annually
Accidents and Incidents	A culture of reporting will develop for all accidents and incidents regardless of the consequences	On-line accident reporting will be established to facilitate better reporting Devise and implement an ongoing promotional campaign to encourage reporting, including near misses	More efficient accident reporting mechanism, reduction in under-reporting and better use of data			Aug 2017
	Insurance Office and S&HS will work closely together on accident investigation	Amend incident processes to include Insurance Office(r) on Perspective system to avoid duplication of effort and ease of record sharing		Dec 2015		

Performance Monitoring	S&HS will monitor all accidents and provide data to the university to monitor performance, and identify and act upon trends	All accidents, including near miss incidents, will be held on a register and closed only upon satisfactory investigation, analysis and improvement action. Register will be maintained by S&HS, monitored by senior management and acted upon in appropriate line management channels	Knowledge gained by experience will be effectively used to steer future action and to facilitate performance improvement		July 2016	
	Sickness absence data will be collected to prioritise and guide wellbeing initiatives.	Sickness absence data will be collected monitored and analysed.	Priorities steered by the outcome of performance monitoring and workforce metrics.			July 2017
	Managers at all levels will be provided with the necessary information for informed decision making on health and safety matters.	A health and safety risk register will be created to aid decision making and prioritisation at all levels of management.	Managers at all levels will have an understanding of the health and safety risks of their undertaking.		Aug 2016	
	Each level of management will ask suitable questions of the level below in order to monitor the effective implementation of their delegation of health and safety.	Guidance will be available defining expectations on each level of management. Training provided in the purpose and implementation	Managers at all levels will be active in the management of health and safety performance.		Aug 2016	
	Comprehensive accident and incident investigation will identify opportunities for improvement.	Managers will be actively involved in accident investigation and taking action to prevent recurrence following accidents, incidents and near misses.	Managers are accountable for the outcomes		Aug 2016	
	Managers H&S performance will be a factor in overall performance assessment	Determine a means of incorporating H&S performance into performance review.	Health and safety performance will be a factor in overall staff performance assessment.			Aug 2017
	Where standards have fallen far below what could reasonably be expected managers will be expected to initiate performance / capability / conduct or disciplinary processes to secure improvements	Investigation into accidents, incidents and near misses will be dealt with by appropriate measures. A review of the relevant policy and guidance will be undertaken to clarify expectations	There will be promotion of an open culture to enable learning and improvement but managers held to account where appropriate to do so.		Aug 2016	
	University governance will provide leadership through the oversight of health and safety performance.	A review of the information received by members of Council and committees of Council will be undertaken to verify that H&S performance measures are communicated to aid decision making and to provide assurance		Aug 2015		

Engagement	Staff at all levels will be empowered to act upon health and safety standards that fall below those that can reasonably be expected in the workplace.	S&HS will actively engage with faculties, schools, services, divisions, other staff groups, staff representatives (eg. safety reps, PWE, SEH) and with individual members of staff in recognising and acting upon unacceptable working environment, workplace hazards, housekeeping and working practices.	All staff will be engaged in securing safe and healthy workplaces	ongoing	Review annually	Review annually
Audit	The system of audit will be revised to provide a measure of the effectiveness of health and safety rules, arrangements and procedures.	<p>The audit system will be revised to drill-down into activities and will be risk-based</p> <p>Auditors will work with School or Service to identify key risks and other areas for investigation to determine the scope of the audit.</p> <p>Outcomes of all audits reported as KPIs for the assurance of Council and staff representatives.</p> <p>Review the process of monitoring the response to audit and the closure of issues identified.</p>	Revised audit is effective in monitoring the effective implementation of procedures and processes.	Aug 2015		
Training	Systematic and comprehensive H&S training programme devised and taken up by all staff.	<p>Devise and implement a comprehensive system of Training Needs Analysis for H&S training in both technical skills and management competence, including refresher training.</p> <p>Deliver the resultant training programme.</p>	<p>All staff trained</p> <p>H&S training a mandatory component of management competencies</p>			Aug 2017