Health and Safety Policy

1. Health and Safety Policy Statement:

Staffordshire University, (henceforth incorporating Staffordshire University Services Limited), is committed to attaining the highest standards of quality in both our learning and working environment. The development of robust and proactive arrangements for managing health and safety is, therefore, an integral feature of our activities and reflects our commitment to achieving continual improvements in workplace standards. Achieving high standards not only enhances our business efficiency and performance but also recognises that our staff and students are our most valuable asset.

This document, which has been approved by the Health and Safety Committee and the Board of Governors, outlines a framework for the management of health and safety at the University and provides the basis by which more detailed arrangements can be developed by Schools and Services to control their risks.

This policy also specifies duties and responsibilities for key personnel. We must be mindful of our own personal responsibilities to take care of our own health and safety and that of our students, staff, visitors, and members of the public. We recognise we must exercise a high degree of care for our students, many of whom have little awareness or experience of the hazards in what is essentially a working environment.

In order to fully achieve our objectives to continuously improve standards this policy must be actively supported by both staff and students and followed and used positively and proactively. In this way we can all make a valuable and significant contribution to ensure our University will continue to be a safe and healthy place in which to work and study.

Our strategic plan explains our vision of what we want to be and how we are making that vision a reality. It lists the goals we have set ourselves for 2021; this policy aims to help achieve this vision.

Professor Liz Barnes  
Vice Chancellor

Colin Hughes  
Chair, Board of Governors
2. Organisation and Responsibilities:

The commitment and co-operation of staff and students of the University are essential if the highest standards of health and safety are to be ensured.

The University considers that health and safety controls are about the management of risk and not necessarily about the elimination of risk altogether. Health and safety controls are in place at the University in order to enable activities to be undertaken in a reasonable and safe manner and are not established to prevent activities which may contain an element of controlled risk; proportionality is essential. All significant risks to staff, students, apprentices, visitors and others, will be assessed, controlled, documented and reviewed according to legislation and in line with our own procedures.

Commitment from senior management at the University is vital and specific duties and responsibilities are assigned to them accordingly.

2.1 The Board of Governors

As the University's governing body, the Board carries ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of employees, students and other individuals whilst on university premises and in other places where they might be affected by the University's operations.

The Board itself is required:
- To satisfy itself that the University has an appropriate written statement of policy on health and safety and effective arrangements for the implementation of that policy
- To ensure that adequate resources for health and safety are provided

In discharging these responsibilities, the Board is advised by the Vice Chancellor, as the principal academic and administrative officer of the University. The Board will:
- Receive regular reports on health and safety from the University Health and Safety Committee
- Be notified of any untoward incidents carrying a major risk to health and safety
- Be notified of any enforcement action taken against the University by the enforcing authorities

Whilst statutory compliance will be accepted as a baseline standard, the Board will ensure that the University is compliantly moving towards best possible health and safety practice.

2.2 Vice Chancellor

As the principal academic and administrative officer of the University, the Vice Chancellor has a legal responsibility, alongside the Board, for ensuring that the University complies with relevant health and safety legislation. These responsibilities are assumed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor in the absence of the Vice Chancellor. In this regard the Vice Chancellor has overall responsibility for health and safety at the University and will:
- Provide clear and visible leadership on health, safety and welfare
• Ensure that the University has a general policy on the management of health and safety and that this policy is communicated to all employees
• Ensure that health and safety is considered in University planning activities
• Advise the University Board of Governors on health and safety matters as appropriate
• Ensure that adequate communication channels are present so that relevant health and safety issues are brought to the attention of senior management
• Ensure that the same management standard is applied to health and safety as to other management functions
• Ensure that senior managers in the University are given sufficient training in health and safety matters to discharge their health and safety responsibilities in a competent manner
• Hold accountable Deans/Directors and other line managers who have been delegated health and safety responsibilities, through appraisal and review processes.

The Vice Chancellor also has the authority to take whatever executive action is considered necessary to prevent serious harm to individuals or to the University; in exceptional circumstances, this may include summarily closing (in whole or in part) University buildings, sites, operations or activities.

The Vice Chancellor has appointed the Chief Operating Officer to be the senior manager with responsibility for overseeing health and safety, to champion implementation of this policy and to chair the Health and Safety Committee. On behalf of the Vice Chancellor, the Chief Operating Officer also ensures that resources are allocated to establish and maintain competent health and safety support and advice.

2.3 Executive

The individual members of the Executive are accountable to the Vice Chancellor for the implementation of the University’s Health and Safety Policy in the areas under their control and for ensuring that adequate resources are made available for this purpose.

Collectively and individually they provide health and safety leadership throughout the University and are responsible for ensuring that:
• Adequate resources are allocated to Deans of Schools and Directors of Support Services to enable them to meet their health and safety responsibilities
• All management decisions taken either individually or in Committee reflect the intentions of the Health and Safety Policy
• Where appropriate, they include health and safety as an agenda item in Executive meetings

Executive are responsible for ensuring that, in support of this policy, a long-term strategic plan will be developed by the University as part of the overall strategic planning of the University with specific goals targeted at:
• Compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation
• Reduced incidence of accidents and incidences of work-related ill-health.
• The development of a positive health and safety culture throughout the University
• Improved health and wellbeing of the workforce.
2.4 Executive Member with Health and Safety Responsibility

The Vice Chancellor has nominated the Chief Operating Officer as the Executive Member with health and safety responsibility for Staffordshire University, who will, in so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Ensure that adequate resources are allocated to health and safety and that it enjoys equal importance with other management objectives
- Champion safety issues at the Executive level in the University
- Ensure that the Vice Chancellor is advised of any safety matters which cannot be dealt with satisfactorily at a lower level
- Hold the final authority for the enforcement of safety issues where there is a need to compel Schools/Services to act
- Make recommendations to the Vice Chancellor and the Board of Governors on health and safety policy and practice, and oversee the work and governance of the University Health and Safety Committee
- Chair the University Health and Safety Committee and ensure appropriate consultative arrangements are in place with employees and their representatives
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to members of the University who have significant responsibilities in the management of health and safety.

The Chief Operating Officer is the representative of the corporate body and the nominated contact for enforcing agencies regarding the serving of formal notices and summons.

In the absence of the Vice Chancellor, the Chief Operating Officer is authorised, in consultation with the Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing as appropriate, to take appropriate executive action to prevent serious harm to individuals or to the University.

2.5 Deans of Schools and Directors of Services

Deans and Directors are ultimately responsible to the Vice Chancellor for the management of health and safety within their areas of control and for ensuring effective implementation of the University's Health and Safety Policy and codes of safe working practice.

To achieve this, they will:

- Foster a health and safety culture in which health, safety and related welfare issues are seen as essential and integral parts of the School/ Service's activity to ensure effective governance on health and safety issues
- Ensure that the School or service has either a specific Health and Safety Group in place and scheduled, or that health and safety is a scheduled part of SMT
- Ensure there is current signed Terms of Reference for the Health and Safety Group or SMT that is reviewed regularly
- Ensure health, safety and wellbeing is a standing agenda item at team meetings and in 1-1’s
- Ensure that local safe working procedures, etc. are in place and adhered to as necessary
- Ensure that the annual health and safety declaration has been prepared and submitted to the Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing and subsequently the University Health and Safety Committee upon request
• Ensure all activities and processes with significant hazards are risk assessed and adequately controlled and those assessments recorded, shared and regularly reviewed
• Seek advice from the Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing on health and safety issues for which clarification or assistance is required.
• Ensure that health and safety policies and procedures are implemented effectively in areas under their control
• Take prompt/appropriate action on any matters brought to their attention by staff, Trades Union Safety Representatives, or the Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing
• Ensure that planned and systematic workplace inspections are carried out on at least an annual basis; for some higher risk activities it is recommended that these be inspected biannually
• Ensure that all portable electrical equipment within their areas of control is electrically tested according to the guidelines issued by Estates and Commercial Services
• Ensure that sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision is given to staff to enable them to carry out their duties in a safe and competent manner
• Ensure that new members of staff receive induction, members of staff changing roles receive appropriate training, and staff members receive appropriate training when new equipment is installed
• Ensure that arrangements are in place for regular monitoring, auditing and review of health and safety performance
• Ensure that external contractors employed directly by the School/Service (i.e. not through Estates and Commercial Services) comply with the standards outlined by Estates and Commercial Services
• Appoint personnel for roles as requested by the Head of Health, Safety and wellbeing, specifically:
  o First Aiders
  o Fire Wardens
  o Evac Chair
  o Trainers
  o Evac Chair operators
  o Accident Investigators
  o DSE Assessors
This list is not exhaustive and is subject to change.
• Ensure time is allocated for adequate training and discharge of the duties for the nominated personnel listed above
• Ensure adequate consultation with those whose health and safety may be affected by changes in School/Service rules, routines and procedures or environmental conditions
• Ensure that University emergency procedures are known and complied with
• Ensure that health and safety training needs have been identified and that staff members receive such training as appropriate

The structure of a School or Service may also include sub-division into smaller operational units managed by Senior Managers. These Managers will have responsibility for implementation of the University's Health and Safety Policy in their areas of control. In practice Deans/Directors may delegate the performance of health and safety duties as described above to Senior Managers as appropriate but will nevertheless provide a clear and decisive lead to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to discharge their responsibilities.
2.6 Director of Estates and Commercial Services

The Director of Estates and Commercial Services holds the following responsibilities in addition to those general health and safety responsibilities as a Director:

- Having a sound knowledge of health and safety legislation and codes of practice relevant to the areas of Estates responsibility
- Ensuring that University buildings, grounds and services do not endanger the health and safety of persons using them and are all compliant according to statutory requirements including:
  - Asbestos
  - Fire
  - Water hygiene and legionella control
  - Lifts and lifting equipment
  - Gas
  - Electric
  - Traffic management
  This list is not exhaustive.
- Ensuring that the provision of lighting, heating, ventilation and supply of drinking water is adequately maintained
- Ensuring that means of access to and egress from University buildings are adequately maintained
- Ensuring that testing and maintenance of systems in respect to fire alarms, smoke alarms and emergency lighting systems are carried out in accordance with a planned programme (including student accommodation units) and correct records kept
- Ensuring that up-to-date fire risk assessments are in place for all University buildings and resultant actions completed
- Ensuring that a risk assessment of all activities/processes and substances have been undertaken, is regularly reviewed and the results formally recorded where appropriate
- Ensuring that maintenance staff members are made aware of any hazards which may affect their safety and health whilst working on University premises (including student accommodation units)
- Ensuring that the effectiveness of the maintenance programme is monitored by periodic inspection of University campus buildings and initiating remedial action where necessary and recorded
- Ensuring that appropriate priority is given to maintenance requests received from Schools/Services which contain health and safety implications
- Ensuring that fire drills are held at least twice per year in all University buildings
- Ensuring that grounds equipment, machinery and chemicals are maintained and used safely in accordance with current legislation
- Ensuring that accident investigations relevant to Estates and Commercial Services activities and spheres of responsibility have been conducted and completed
- Ensuring that an annual health and safety 'Action Plan' is developed and submitted to the University Health and Safety Committee upon request.
- Ensuring that classrooms, lecture theatres, offices, corridors, toilets and general work areas are included within a planned cleaning programme
- Ensuring that Estates and Commercial Services vehicles are maintained and regularly serviced
- Ensuring any assessments for vibration are completed and controls actioned accordingly
• Ensuring that adequate training and health and safety information is given to all Estates and Commercial Services personnel so that their duties can be carried out in a safe and competent manner
• Ensuring that building/maintenance work carried out by external contractors commissioned by Estates and Commercial Services complies with relevant statutory provisions and is in accordance with the standards outlined in the ‘Code of Safe Working Practices for Contractors Employed by Staffordshire University’
• Maintaining records of all portable electrical appliances/tools in use within the University and ensuring they are electrically tested according to their policy (this is subject to Schools/Services informing Estates and Commercial Services of the assets and need for testing)
• Ensuring that the fixed wiring of every University building is inspected, tested and maintained on a regular basis by competent persons in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations and the IEE Code of Practice for In-Service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment. Appropriate records are to be kept

2.7 Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The role of the Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing involves a combination of advisory and executive functions. This Officer is the ‘competent person’ appointed under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and reports to the Chief Operating Officer on a day-to-day basis for the execution of their duties but will have direct access to the University Executive on matters considered appropriate.

In practice, this Officer will work closely with all staff. The main duties will be to:
• Advise the Vice Chancellor through the Chief Operating Officer on all matters relating to health and safety issues concerning the University
• Develop, implement, monitor, review and revise University health and safety policies and guidance
• Advise on statutory provisions
• Promote health, safety and welfare within the University
• Review the effectiveness of health and safety training and provide suitable training and development
• Monitor formally reported health and safety incidents, carry out independent investigations where it is deemed necessary and provide the appropriate advice and assistance in implementing remedial actions identified through these investigations
• Attendance at, and advice to the University Health and Safety Committee
• Periodically audit the health and safety management systems of Schools/Services to ensure effectiveness and provide advice and assistance in addressing areas for action identified by these audits
• Provide an effective and accessible information service on health, safety, welfare and wellbeing
• Follow a programme of continued professional development
• Prepare an annual health and safety report for submission to the Board of Governors
• Compile accident data
• Represent the interests of the University at meetings of bodies whose activities may influence health and safety issues at the University
• Appraise the effectiveness of the University’s Health and Safety Management system
• Provide effective liaison with Trades’ Union Safety Representatives and external safety services and specialists
• Liaise with relevant enforcement agencies and co-ordinate their visits and inspections
• Support and advise Schools and Services in the execution of their duties
• Carry out other such health and safety duties that may be assigned by the University.

2.8 School/Service Health and Safety Roles

Deans and Directors will appoint personnel as requested by the Head if Health, safety and wellbeing. These roles include:
• Health and Safety Co-ordinators
• First Aiders
• Fire Wardens
• Evac Chair
• Trainers
• Evac Chair operators
• Accident Investigators
• DSE Assessors
• Risk assessment approvers
• Student trip approvers
• Staff travel approvers
This list is not exhaustive.

These roles are advisory and do not carry executive responsibility for health and safety within the School or Service. Deans and Directors must ensure staff are allocated time to complete their role and attend training. The duties will be to:

2.9 Specialist Health and Safety Roles

2.9.1 Biological Safety Officer
(incl. Genetically Modified Organisms and Human Tissue Act)

Duties:

• Advise on the containment and training aspects of work relevant to biological health and safety
• Ensure that appropriate training of staff and students is carried out
• Advise on risk assessments and ensure these are in place
• Ensure that the local rules for the safety of staff and students are drawn up and followed
• Advise on the safe storage, transport and disposal of infectious materials, genetically modified organisms, harmful or potentially harmful material and ensure that records kept are current and accurate
• Organise local inspections
• Provide technical support on risk assessment and classification of genetically modified organisms
• Ensure that accidents/incidents/spillages/etc are reported, appropriately investigated and followed up
• Advise on appropriate methods for testing for the presence of viable organisms outside the primary containment, if deemed necessary
• Liaise with the University Health and Safety Committee and Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing to implement University policies and ensure that statutory notifications are made
• Report quarterly to, and attend when required, the University Health and Safety Committee on matters relating to Biological Safety
• Inform employers of any changes to the relevant regulations.

2.9.2 Radiation Protection Supervisor:

Duties to:

• Be fully familiar with the University's health and safety policy relating to radiation protection and remain up to date with relevant statutory provisions.
• Provide advice to members of the Schools on matters of radiation protection.
• Follow a programme of continued professional development so that professional expertise is maintained.
• Provide advice to the Dean on the formulation and revision of policy and procedures in relation to radiation protection.
• Liaise with the Head of Health and Safety on radiation matters as appropriate.
• Conduct or co-ordinate systematic inspections to identify unsafe or unhealthy conditions or work practices and take remedial action as appropriate.
• Investigate and report all accidents involving radiation.
• Disseminate radiation protection information to appropriate staff and students.
• Ensure that new members of staff involved in radiation protection receive adequate information, instruction and training.
• Liaise with internal or external radiation protection specialists as necessary.
• Determine the areas of activity which require specific control and supervision.
• Carry out area monitoring to determine exposure levels as appropriate.
• Advise on storage, distribution and disposal of radioactive substances in accordance with Environment Agency licensing criteria.
• Carry out other such radiation protection duties as may be assigned by the University.

2.9.3 School Laser Safety Advisor

Duties:

• To provide advice to the University on matters of laser safety and safe working practices
• To follow a programme of continuing professional development
• To co-operate with the University's appointed Laser Safety competent person
• Maintain up-to-date records of Class 3B and 4 laser products on site
• Maintain up-to-date records of personnel authorised to operate and maintain each laser
• Maintain up-to-date records of the servicing arrangements for each laser
• Ensuring that a thorough risk assessment has been carried out by each LSS for any procedure involving a laser system of class 3b or higher
• Monitor compliance with procedures for laser safety and take immediate action in instances of non-compliance and inadequate or insufficient procedures
• Carry out an audit of laser facilities as required
- Arrange and/or oversee laser safety training for staff and students
- Inspection of new laser facilities and products
- Investigate any accidents or dangerous occurrences involving lasers or laser radiation
- To be an ex-officio member of the University Health and Safety Committee.

2.10 Personal Responsibilities: All Staff

University members of staff at every level have a responsibility for looking after their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. To this end, members of staff have the following specific responsibilities for:

- Conducting themselves in a manner conducive to their own safety and health and the safety of others
- Fulfilling the contents and spirit of the University Health and Safety Policy to the best of their ability
- Co-operating with the University in complying with statutory obligations and approved codes of practice
- Undertaking any health and safety training which is deemed necessary to secure the health, safety and welfare of themselves or others
- Only using machinery, plant or equipment which they have been trained to use in the manner for which they were designed and in accordance with the appropriate safety precautions
- Reporting all defects in plant and equipment through School/Service channels
- Reporting all defects in procedures or systems of work which it is believed may cause injury or ill health
- Reporting all accidents and incidents immediately, whether injury has been sustained or not, by following the University’s procedure
- Complying with all local and University health and safety policies and procedures and with the arrangements in place to control health and safety risks
- Ensuring that the highest standards of housekeeping are maintained in their workplace
- Demonstrating their personal commitment to health and safety through the adoption of best practice and encouraging those whom they supervise to do the same.

Staff should ensure that members of the public who are visiting their work are made aware of any appropriate health and safety requirements and that adequate procedures are in place to ensure their visitor’s safety during building evacuation, or other reasonably foreseeable emergency that may arise.

An employee who fails to take reasonable measures to protect the health and safety of himself/herself and that of others or fails to comply with the general duties and procedures outlined in this document may be subject to the University’s disciplinary procedures.

2.11 Personal Responsibilities: Academic and Technical Staff

Academic and Technical staff hold the following responsibilities in addition to those general health and safety responsibilities shown in 2.10.
Universities have a legal duty to provide 'such supervision as is necessary' to ensure the health and safety of both postgraduate and undergraduate students. When dealing with postgraduate students it is important to understand that this duty cannot be discharged by relying solely upon a student's status or perceived competence.

Academic staff (permanent, part-time and visiting) have an additional level of responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of the students who work and study under their direction and supervision. This includes:

- Satisfying themselves that the risks to health and safety arising from activities undertaken and equipment, materials, facilities, etc. used by students have been addressed so far as is reasonably practicable
- Ensuring that they and their students are fully aware of the risks to health and safety associated with the academic activities under their control, the protection and prevention measures in place and any relevant emergency procedures
- Checking that the student is following the agreed procedures
- Ensuring that students are evacuated promptly from teaching areas in the case of emergency evacuations using the appropriate routes
- Demonstrating their personal commitment to health and safety through the adoption of best practice and encouraging those whom they supervise to do the same

It is a statutory duty that competency requirements for all staff are identified and that they receive the necessary information, instruction and training to carry out their duties in a way that does not endanger themselves or others.

2.12 Personal Responsibilities: Visiting Academics and Guest Workers

Visitors to the University who work within or for a School/Service do so only with the permission of the appropriate Dean/Director and must follow University and Departmental Health and Safety policies and procedures.

In such circumstances visiting academics and workers must be afforded the same degree of protection against risks to their health and safety as the employees and students of the University. Such visiting academics and workers shall also receive, from the commissioning or host School/Service, suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training to enable them to undertake their work safely and in accordance with University and departmental rules – all significant risks shall be assessed in accordance with University Departmental requirements.

2.13 Personal Responsibilities: Students incorporating Apprentices

The attention of all students of Staffordshire University is drawn to their legal responsibility, under section 8 of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974, not to interfere with or misuse anything, any objects, structures or systems of work, provided by Staffordshire University in the interests of health and safety.

Students should:

- Report any accident at work which results in personal injury or ill health, however minor, and every dangerous occurrence, including fire, using the approved reporting mechanisms.
• Report 'near miss' incidents which have the potential to cause injury or ill health, using the approved process
• Notify their Personal Tutor when suffering from a disease or medical condition which may be caused by, or made worse by, work activities (this information will be treated as confidential)
• Not proceed with any activity if they feel it poses a threat to their health and safety, or to that of others
• Report any unsafe or unhealthy working conditions, or suspected faults in buildings, building fabric, or in any equipment, to your academic tutor or the nearest Information Point without delay.

Any member of staff or any student may contact the Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing for advice and guidance.

3. Arrangements:

Staffordshire University’s health and safety management is based on the Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE) guidance ‘HSG65 - Managing for Health and Safety’. It follows the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach and achieves a balance between the systems and behavioural aspects of management. It also treats health and safety management as an integral part of good management generally, rather than as a stand-alone system. The system also links with the UCEA/USHA ‘Leadership and Management of Health and Safety for Higher Education Institutions’.

Governance of health and safety is by the Health and Safety Committee. This is chaired by the Chief Operating Officer as the Executive Member with health and safety responsibility. Meetings are every quarter and representatives from across all Schools and Services attend, as well as Trade Union and Student Union Representatives. This committee has an agreed and regularly reviewed Terms of Reference.

School and service Health and Safety Groups feed into and from the Health and Safety Committee. These, whether stand-alone groups or part of the SMT, have an agreed and regularly reviewed, Terms of Reference.
Arrangements for all aspects of health and safety are available in the form of guidance, training, policy and information. Information is reviewed regularly and available for all staff, noting that the guidance may be provided by other Services, for example Estates and Commercial Services or Human Resources and Organisational Development, not solely by Health, Safety and Wellbeing. Topics include:

- Accident Reporting and Investigation
- Apprentices
- Asbestos
- Children in the University
- Contractor Management
- COSHH
- Driving
- Display Screen Equipment
- Electric including PAT
- Emergency Arrangements including Evacuations
- Evac Chairs
- Eye Test
- Fire Safety
- Fire Wardens
- First Aid including AED
- Gas Safety
- Health and Safety Committee
- Health and Safety Groups
- Health and Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Strategy and Action Plan
- Health and Safety Law
- Homeworking/Remote Working
- Lifts and Lifting Equipment
- Lone Working and Personal Safety
- Manual Handling
- Mental Health First Aiders
- New and Expectant Mothers page
- Noise at Work
- Occupational Health Surveillance
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Portable Electrical Appliance Testing
- Risk Assessment
- Self-declarations
- Smoking
- Staff Travel and Trips
- Stress
- Student Fieldwork and Trips
- Student Placements and Practice Learning
- Thermal Comfort
- Training
- Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drones)
- Vibration
- Violence
- Water Management
- Working at Height
This list is not exhaustive and subject to change according to need and legislative changes.

**Author:**

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