1.0. Introduction

1.1. Furniture and furnishings may significantly increase fire spread in rooms and those circulation spaces, corridors and stair enclosures that form the fire escape routes from building. Therefore, their potential to increase the fire loading and spread of fire need to be considered by departments when providing, arranging or positioning furniture and furnishings in respect to fire safety and the impact to the Means of Escape (MoE) from the premises to staff students and visitors.

1.2. This note has been produced to assist in the purchasing and management of furniture and furnishings in UCL Departments, and compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

2.0. Furniture & Furnishings - Workplace / Office / Teaching Space

2.1. Office Furniture - generally, reputable suppliers of office furniture will provide furniture and furnishings that meet the various regulations suitable for the workplace, which will generally be tested to British Standards such as BS EN 1021-1&2 and BS 7176:2007 etc.

2.1. Office furniture purchased through a UCL approved and reputable suppliers (e.g. JPA) will have fire safety measures equal or approved to these tests. It is recommended that this standard (equal or approved) should be applied, when refurbishment and replacement of furniture takes place within UCL Departments.

2.2. Domestic Furniture - where furniture has been introduced to the workplace that was originally intended for domestic or home use (not commercial), then different regulations apply. The upholstered furniture for domestic use should only contain those filling materials specified in the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire)(Safety) Regulations 1988 (FFFSF 1988); and that invisible part of permanent covers should comply with the provisions of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire)(Safety) Amendment Regulations 1989.

2.3. Upholstery products for use in offices, hotels and institutions is tested against BS 7176-2007 is a specification which describes four different hazard levels for contract furniture and describes appropriate tests for evaluating furnishing materials.
The hazard categories are:

- Low Hazard
- Medium Hazard
- High Hazard
- Very High Hazard

Table 1 - lists some typical furniture end-use areas and suggests appropriate hazard categories:

| Performance requirements on application of hazard categories as specified in BS 7176-2007 |
|-----------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Low Hazard                                   | Medium Hazard               | High Hazard                  | Very High Hazard |
| Offices                                       | Hotel Bedrooms**             | Sleeping accommodation in certain hospital wards and in certain hostels |
| Schools                                       | Public Buildings             |                             | Prison cells     |
| Colleges                                      | Restaurants                 |                             |                 |
| **Universities**                             | Service Messes              |                             |                 |
| Museums                                       | Places of Public Entertainment |                             |                 |
| Exhibitions                                  | Public halls                |                             |                 |
| Day centres                                  | Public houses and bars      |                             |                 |
|                                              | Casinos                     |                             |                 |
|                                              | Hospitals                   |                             |                 |
|                                              | Hostels                     |                             |                 |

*Note* - there are locations at UCL where a higher standard due to local fire strategy or special risks require ‘Medium Hazard’ furniture

**Note** - this standard should be applied to UCL Halls of Residences

### 3.0. Sleeping Accommodation

3.1. Ideally, the use of furnishings, beds and bedding, and synthetic materials, which are easily ignited or have rapid spread of flame characteristics should be avoided wherever possible in all other premises. The use of flame-retardant materials will substantially reduce the fire risk. Residences may contain a range of materials and could include:

- Mattresses, bedding, furnishings, upholstered furniture and cushions;
- Curtains, drapes and other textile hangings;
- Resident / guest display material on walls; and
- Promotional and seasonal festival displays.
3.2. **Sleeping Accommodation (Halls of Residences or Department Sleeping Accommodation)** - furniture and furnishings used in Student Halls of Residences (including any supplied by UCL Residential Services or any that are brought in by Student Residents) must comply with the current regulations.

- It is recommended that all furniture & furnishings used in UCL Halls of Residences meet ‘**MEDIUM HAZARD**’ (as per Hotels) iaw Table 1 above and BS 7176-2007.

3.3. **Sleeping Accommodation (Student Lodgings or Houses in Multiple Occupancy [HMOs])** - furniture and furnishings used in domestic premises (including any supplied by the owners or landlords or any that are brought in by residents) must comply with the Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (amended 1989/1993).

- Further guidance on the Regulations is available from the **Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)** at [www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk) (under product safety information) or from your local Trading Standards department.

4.0. **Head of Departments and Staff Responsibilities**

4.1. Heads of Department are to ensure that only furniture & furnishings that comply with the workplace and commercial standards above (See Table 1 - Low Hazard) are introduce (whether or not they are new or second hand) into their departments and in UCL premises as a whole.

4.2. In particular, those members of staff who purchase or provide furniture for their own UCL rooms must be able to demonstrate satisfactorily that the items of furniture comply with at least FFFSR 1988 as a base standard. Any items or material not compliant (or there is doubt to the providence or otherwise), should be removed from UCL premises.

5.0. **UCL Estates Project Managers**

5.1. **Project furniture purchase** - generally, where furniture is supplied by JPA it will meet the fire standards required by the Fire Safety Order 2005. However, there may be certain locations particularly common areas / circulation space and Student Residences where a high standard of furniture safety is required and advice should be sort prior to specification and purchase.
6.0. **Floor Coverings**

6.1. Some floor coverings, when involved in fire, may react to produce large volumes of heat and smoke although the surface spread of flame may be relatively slow. The possibility that the floor coverings may present a hazard to the Means of Escape should be considered when being ordered or replaced, as should the suitability of surfaces, walls and ceilings to protected routes. If new floor coverings are to be provided, they should comply with the BS 5287: Specification for assessment and labelling of textile floor covering tested to BS 4790.

7.0. **Curtains, Drapes and Other Textile Hangings**

7.1 Curtains or drapes should be of durably flame-retarded fabric or inherently flame-retarded fabric and should conform to the latest edition of British Standard 5867: Part 2 - Fabric Type B when tested in accordance with the latest edition of British Standard 5438. They should be arranged so as not to trail on the floor and have a central opening when in front of pairs of doors. Curtains or drapes should not conceal notices and when hung in front of fire exit doors should not obstruct fire exit signs, untreated fabric or readily combustible materials are not permitted to be hung in stair enclosures forming part of the Means of Escape.

8.0. **Artificial and Dried Foliage**

8.1. All artificial and dried foliage used for decorative purposes in public areas should be flame retardant treated, including; corridors, landings, lift lobbies and stair enclosures or ‘Dead End’ corridor conditions.

8.2. Dried flowers and grasses should not be sprayed with hair lacquer or other like substance as such treatment will only enhance the ease of ignition and rate of fire spread.

9.0. **Display Materials and Decorations**

9.1. Displays are often located in corridors and in entrance foyers, and generally comprise materials such as paper, cardboard and plastic, which provide a means for the rapid spread of fire. You should evaluate what material could ignite first and what would cause the fire to develop and spread, and assess how materials used in temporary or permanent displays would interact with surface linings and position them accordingly. To reduce the risk of fire spread, you should consider the following:

- Avoid the use of displays in corridors and foyers,
- Minimise the size and number of display areas to discrete, separated areas (e.g. along a corridor);
• Treat displays with proprietary flame-retardant sprays;
• The use of display boxes;
• Keep displays away from curtains, light fittings and heaters;
• Keep displays away from ceiling voids which may lack fire barriers; and
• Ensure that there are no ignition sources in the vicinity.

10.0. Further Information

10.1. Further information on purchasing of Furniture & Furnishings and their specification can be found by contacting the UCL Procurement Services:

UCL Office Furniture Suppliers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JPA Furniture</th>
<th>Tel:      0800 0789330</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Suppliers to UCL of office &amp;</td>
<td>Email:    <a href="mailto:info@jpa-furniture.com">info@jpa-furniture.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residential accommodation furniture)</td>
<td>Web:      <a href="http://www.jpa-furniture.com">http://www.jpa-furniture.com</a></td>
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10.2. Further Information

A range of helpful articles and reference are available from the following web site:

• [http://www.satra.co.uk/spotlight/index.php?](http://www.satra.co.uk/spotlight/index.php?)