



Health and Safety Committee

Covid-19 Meeting

27 April 2021, 3.00pm

Minutes

Present Members:

Ms Fiona Ryland, (Convenor)

Ms Victoria Adrienne

Dr Matthew Blain, Executive Director of Human Resources

Miss Hayley Boakes

Ms Sandra Bond

Ms Sonia Buckingham

Mr Colin Byelong

Dr Alun Coker

Miss Yasmeen Daoud

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Mr Keith Harvey

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Mr David Ladd

Mrs Hayley Ramsay, Deputy Head of Safety

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Mr Paul Stirk, Director of Safety Services

Ms Joanne Tapper

Dr Rob Wilson

Attendees:

Mr Dev Agarwal

Mr Ian Dancy

Mr David Everett

Mr Michael Jorge

Miss Fiona O'Farrell

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Ms Tracy Pearmain

Prof Irene Petersen

Mr David Stevens

Apologies:

Dr Theo Bryer

Dr Matt Lougher

Ms Carol Paige

Part I: Preliminary Business

64 Minutes

64.1 The Health and Safety Committee (HSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2021. Regarding Min. 61.4, it would be confirmed how many Trade Union representatives would be included in the membership of each sub-committee of the HSC.

65 Matters Arising (Paper 8-43)

- 65.1 Regarding minute 56.2: consider the Trade Unions' request for a report on how the risks associated with staffing issues - exacerbated by the increased workload associated with the pandemic and the rise in student numbers - were being addressed; it was agreed that this would be included as part of the work to create a set of UCL principles for a workload model.
- 65.2 Regarding minute 56.7: consider a request for outdoor seating on the Institute of Education concourse; this had been taken up by the Campus Experience project and would be considered at their next meeting.
- 65.3 Regarding minute 60.2: examine the hour-by-hour usage of Library Services study spaces and investigate whether availability of the service is being advertised to students; it was reported that the Library Services team continued to track usage and communicate the service, including availability.
- 65.4 Regarding minute 60.5: consider the use of student accommodation as a quarantine hotel for students arriving from countries on the banned travel list; all students arriving from overseas that are eligible and have accepted an accommodation offer through the UCL Accommodation office were being offered support in one of two ways, depending on whether or not the

accommodation was en-suite. Due to the demand for accommodation for those students that meet the UCL Accommodation guarantee, there was not enough accommodation to be able to extend this offer to all UCL students or set aside sufficient UCL accommodation to provide a stand-alone quarantine hotel.

- 65.5 Regarding minute 61.6, produce a proposal for greater inclusion of Students Union concerns in the HSC agenda, or for a separate meeting process; a meeting was scheduled to discuss the proposal and an update would be provided at the next meeting of HSC.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

66 Covid-19 update

- 66.1 The Convenor summarised the return to campus and future of work plans. Communications were being prepared in readiness for the next stages of the government roadmap out of lockdown, signposting a September return to campus for the majority. There had been a good take up for the Return to UCL roadshows and Future of Work survey.
- 66.2 It was confirmed that departments should continue to observe the two metres social distancing rule in buildings. As noted in the risk assessment for working on site at UCL during the Covid-19 pandemic, if it is impossible to maintain a two metres distance in a specific environment or for a specific task, the activity should only continue if it is business critical and has approval from the Head of Department.

67 UCL Covid-19 outbreak response

- 67.1 The Director of Workplace Health reported that there had been no outbreaks since the last meeting, two positive test results for students and none for staff. The increased Security presence in student accommodation had improved the observance of social distancing there. A process would be introduced for issuing home testing kits, which would be available in tandem with the testing centre at Bidborough House. Communications regarding the return to work would encourage people to be tested twice a week.

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67.2 Although under review, the PCR testing facility at the Royal Free Hospital would continue for the foreseeable future and any change would be announced in advance.

68 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions (Paper 8-44)

68.1 The Trade Unions suggested control measures could be used to mitigate the risk of COVID outbreaks as UCL moved to a higher occupancy level, such as:

68.2 Introduce void periods during the day for multi-user offices or a ban on eating at desks, to encourage people to leave the office for an hour to mitigate against the build-up of infectious aerosols; a campaign to encourage as many as possible to get a lateral flow test twice a week; a commitment with an action plan to ensure that pre-Covid health and safety workspace regulations are followed (11 cubic metres of working space per worker - not applicable to teaching space); clear maximum occupancy and ventilation details (for example mechanical ventilation times air changes per hour or passive ventilation via windows/doors) indicated on all rooms; and a high level review of the suitability and safety of large multi-occupant offices in a post-Covid era.

68.3 A formal response to the Trade Unions request would be produced.

69 Updated general risk assessment for those working on site at UCL (Paper 8-45)

69.1 Mr Dev Agarwal presented a paper summarising the updates that had been made to the general risk assessment for working during the pandemic, which had now reached version 7. The Director of Safety Services added that departments could attach the new version to any revised local risk assessment, rather than painstakingly update their existing risk assessment to match the new version.

69.2 The Committee approved the new version of the risk assessment and the simplified process for updating local risk assessments.

70 Quarterly performance report (Paper 8-46)

70.1 Mr Dev Agarwal presented a report on health and safety performance data for the second quarter of the academic year 2020/21.

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- 70.2 It was agreed to review the arrangement agreed in October 2020 that if a student accommodation building had not had a naturally occurring fire evacuation alarm within one month, a fire evacuation drill would be scheduled.
- 70.3 The Director of Human Resources would produce a plan for the improvement of mandatory training, for the next meeting of the Committee.
- 70.3 In future a qualification would be added to the number of Covid-19 non-compliance incidents in the UCL Dashboard section of the report, indicating that each incident reported could include a number of incidences of non-compliance. This is because individual Library Services' incidents could include the number of contraventions observed in a particular period.

71 Ionising Radiations Committee quarterly report (Paper 8-47)

- 71.1 Miss Fiona O'Farrell presented a report of the key activities and notable points for the last quarter.

72 Genetic Modification Safety Committee quarterly report (Paper 8-48)

- 72.1 The Committee received the report of the key updates and reporting performance for the past quarter.

73 Any other business

- 73.1 A Trade Union representative would provide Estates Division with the details of a local incident involving failure of air conditioning and its possible implications for ventilation, for further investigation and response.

The meeting finished at 4.25 pm

Jon Blackman

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