



**Work Health and Safety Committee**

Thursday 2 February 2023, 10.35am

**Minutes**

**Present Members:**

Mr Andy Smith, Convenor

Miss Hayley Boakes

Ms Sandra Bond

Mrs Sonia Buckingham

Dr Alun Coker

Mr Adrien Cooper, Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee

Mr Ian Dancy, Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee

Mrs Joanne English

Mr Simon Galloway

Mr Keith Harvey

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Mr Damian Johnson

Mr Henry Killworth

Mr David Ladd

Mrs Portia Lamb, Head of Safety Governance and Risk

Ms Denise Long, Director of Student Support and Wellbeing

Mr Muhammad Umair Mehmood

Professor Ivan Parkin, Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee

Ms Tracy Pearmain

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Dr Patrick Ward, (Interim) Executive Director of Health and Safety

Dr Robert Wilson

**Attendees:**

Miss Fiona O'Farrell

Mr Danny Patel

**Apologies:**

Mr Deniz Akinci

Dr Theo Bryer

Miss Donna Dalrymple, Chief People Officer

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Ms Joanne Tapper

**Part I: Preliminary Business**

**19 Minutes**

19.1 The Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2022.

**20 Matters Arising (Paper 3-14)**

20.1 Regarding minute 12.1: bring a proposed date for closure of the actions relating to the Prion Unit Containment Level 3 laboratories power outages of 18 and 19 July 2022. The Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee reported that the improvements to upgrade works and automatic load shedding capability of the electrical power infrastructure were complete. The only remaining action was a power failure simulation load test that needed to be conducted during the summer and was tentatively planned for June. Mr Damian Johnson commented that there was still work ongoing by Estates Division to finalise the outstanding action regarding the escalation process for emergency alarms. The Convenor requested an improvement plan on response times to emergency alarm activations.

20.2 Regarding minute 12.6: look at immediate action that could be taken for large teaching spaces to reduce congestion risks, for example Fire Evacuation Marshal training. The Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee reported that the Fire Safety Team was liaising with Information Services Division about providing local fire safety information in large teaching spaces for the start of each session. Evacuation signage had been deployed in Logan Hall, Institute of Education. The Convenor requested that instructions for lecturers be incorporated in the local fire safety information in large teaching spaces ahead of the next academic year.

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- 20.3 Regarding minute 12.7: establish a mechanism of measures and checks on the waste management contractor's performance. The Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee confirmed the performance measures now in place. And the Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee reported that waste collection had now improved.
- 20.4 Regarding minute 12.10: add to the Institute of Education overcrowding action plan a request from the Trade Unions for essential rest and eating and drinking facilities for staff. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee reported that he would locate a suitable room and agree a short-term plan of action before the next meeting.
- 20.5 Regarding minute 18.1: ask a member of the fire safety team to provide a response to Joanne English about the university's position on the use of electric bikes and scooters on campus. This had been completed.
- 20.6 Regarding minute 18.2: pursue the matter of a homeless person sleeping on large pipes and cables at the basement of the Anatomy Building with the Head of Security. This had been dealt with.

### **Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion**

#### **21 Work Health & Safety Committee Review (Paper 3-15)**

- 21.1 The (Interim) Executive Director of Health and Safety presented a paper outlining a proposal to review the agenda and operation of the WHSC following the recent Workplace Health and Safety Gap Analysis.
- 21.2 It was proposed that the an agenda plan would be reviewed through the year to ensure the Committee meets UCL and statutory requirements and an annual plan be produced with standing agenda items to ensure the committee covers all recommended areas; that all items apart from Any Other Business be on the agenda ahead of the meeting to allow for questions to be answered during the meeting where possible, and reduce the number of actions and matters arising; identify where tactical matters are best addressed and if necessary propose the formation of additional sub-committees; and review meeting frequency.
- 21.3 The WHSC approved the review. The (Interim) Executive Director of Health and Safety would bring the item back at the next meeting following discussion with members.

**22 UMC Health and Safety report (Paper 3-16)**

- 22.1 The Head of Safety Governance and Risk and the Director of Workplace Health presented the health and safety monthly data and activities report for December 2022.
- 22.2 The Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee commented that departments' ex-staff members remaining in the HR data negatively affected their compliance statistics for mandatory training. There was also an issue where students who had completed mandatory training were categorised as non-compliant on becoming part-time staff. The Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee would raise this with HR.
- 22.3 The Students' Union noted that the percentage of days lost due to mental health issues had increased slightly since the last report. The Director of Workplace Health summarised the advice and support available. The Trade Unions stated that student advisers had insufficient support from people trained in counselling; the Director of Student Support and Wellbeing agreed to discuss the matter in a separate meeting.

**23 Health and safety objectives**

- 23.1 The (Interim) Executive Director of Health and Safety reported that last year's objectives would be rolled over for the current academic year. It was agreed that a proposal for an updated objective for T100 would be brought to the Committee before going to UMC.

**24 Standard: Personal Protective Equipment for Wet Labs (Paper 3-17)**

- 24.1 The Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee presented the above standard on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for wet labs, which was discussed at the December Chemical Safety Sub-Committee meeting where the consensus was that PPE was advisable but not mandatory.
- 24.2 Both the (Interim) Executive Director of Health and Safety and the Convenor believed that the wearing of PPE in laboratories should be made mandatory. The Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee asked that the WHSC take this recommendation to UMC to make the decision. The Convenor requested that the Chemical Safety Sub-Committee provide further consultation to refine the

proposal and that the (Interim) Executive Director of Health and Safety also attend.

**25 Artificial Optical Radiation Standard (Paper 3-18)**

- 25.1 Miss Fiona O'Farrell presented the above revised document, noting that having a robust standard in place was critical to ensure that UCL could clearly demonstrate compliance with the relevant legislation. The standard had been updated as it was due for review and the changes had been based on feedback received from the Health and Safety Executive on their experiences and expectations following other higher education inspections.
- 25.2 The WHSC approved the standard.

**26 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions**

- 26.1 There were none.

**27 Update on student incident**

- 27.1 The (Interim) Executive Director of Health and Safety reported that he and the Director of Student Support and Wellbeing had reviewed the investigation and recommendations. They had not accepted all the recommendations, however where the recommendations were appropriate they were being implemented.
- 27.2 The Trade Unions commented that there needed to be a mechanism to deal with a mental health crisis in a laboratory context, and for the return of the student to the laboratory. The Director of Student Support and Wellbeing reported that the mechanisms were in place but in this case a referral to the casework team was missed. It was recommended by the Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee that the referral of such incidents be made to the senior management structure as soon as possible.

**Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information**

**28 Any other business**

- 28.1 The Students' Union reiterated their request for an appointed staff representative on the Committee membership. The Convenor agreed to the request and would take it to UMC for approval.

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- 28.2 Miss Fiona O'Farrell raised the issue of the vacancy for a Chair of the Radiation Safety Sub-Committee. The Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee suggested a suitably qualified person from the Dept of Chemistry and would ask them to contact Fiona.

The meeting finished at 12.00pm.

Jonathan Blackman