



Work Health and Safety Committee

28 January 2022, 2.00pm

Minutes

Present Members:

Ms Fiona Ryland, Convenor

Professor Erik Arstad, Chair, Radiation Safety Sub-Committee

Dr Matthew Blain, Chief People Officer

Miss Hayley Boakes

Ms Sandra Bond

Dr Theo Bryer

Mrs Sonia Buckingham

Mr Colin Byelong

Dr Alun Coker

Mr Ian Dancy, Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee

Miss Yasmin Daoud

Mrs Joanne English

Mr Simon Galloway

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Mr Keith Harvey

Mr David Ladd

Ms Denise Long, Director of Student Support and Wellbeing

Dr Matt Lougher

Professor Ivan Parkin, Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee

Ms Tracy Pearmain

Mrs Hayley Ramsay, Head of Safety Governance and Risk

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Mr Mike Sheppard, Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee

Mr Paul Stirk, Director of Safety Services

Dr Rob Wilson

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Attendees:

Ms Jane Adamson

Mr Dev Agarwal

Ms Irida Gaikwad

Mr Stephen Moore

Mr Chris Morgan

Ms Fiona Naughton

Apologies:

Dr Rebecca Caygill

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Professor John Ward, Chair, GM and Biological Safety Sub-Committee

Part I: Preliminary Business

32 Membership

32.1 Mr Colin Byelong had become the third UCU Trade Union representative, Ms Tracy Pearmain replacing him as the listed UCU observer.

33 Minutes

33.1 The Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2021.

34 Matters Arising (Paper 4-20)

34.1 Regarding minute 25.4: reconsider the message about the importance of void periods between teaching sessions. The message had been communicated in the weekly Coronavirus update after the last meeting. It had also been reviewed and updated in the teaching guidance.

34.2 Regarding minute 25.4: review the appropriateness of the current communication plan and format with Communications and Marketing. Media Relations were keeping the Covid-19 communications under review and met weekly with public health and other colleagues on the Public Health Advisory Panel (PHAP) to ensure that messages reflected their advice and the latest publicly available data, taking into account behavioural change best practice to encourage compliance.

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- 34.3 Regarding minute 25.4: Review the messaging regarding the process of notifying people after a positive case (including the use of the Connect to Protect flow chart). Communications and Marketing had updated the messaging and flowchart and the Director of Student Support and Wellbeing had reviewed the updates.
- 34.4 Regarding minute 25.5: Review the room signage regarding CO₂ monitors again. The CO₂ signage had been signed off by senior staff and the Trade Unions. The CO₂ sensor green light was being reprogrammed to be <800ppm rather than <1000ppm. Room signage had been reviewed in discussion with the Trade Unions and updated signage was being installed across the campus alongside changes to teaching space signage (ventilation type and capacity).
- 34.5 Regarding minute 28.1: Circulate the revised terms of reference and membership to members. This was issued on 21 December. It was approved by the University Management Committee (UMC) at their 25 January meeting.
- 34.6 Regarding minute 30.2: find out the number of security staff who live with the clinically extremely vulnerable to help inform a decision on their being allowed to work at home. The number was found to be very low and UCL had since moved to support those people. The Trade Unions felt that the communication on the matter implied that support was discretionary; the Chief People Officer disagreed and added that the advice for those at higher risk of serious illness if they become infected with Covid-19 would be included in future Covid-19 communications.
- 34.7 Regarding minute 30.3: consider Covid-19 passes for coming on to campus. The PHAP had advised against introducing Covid-19 passes.
- 34.8 Regarding minute 30.3: arrange for Covid-19 risk assessments to be reviewed for the return to campus in the new year. The risk assessments had been reviewed regularly to include both government and UCL guidance. There were no additional mitigation measures required for the Omicron variant. It was agreed that the Covid-19 risk assessments would be updated to state that LFT tests should be taken twice a week or more, if the person doing the testing was going to attend an event on campus.
- 34.9 Regarding minute 30.4: consider having the occupancy level reduced in rooms with ventilation rates of less than 12.17 metres per person. The

occupancy level had been reviewed and a small number of teaching rooms removed from the timetable. Other mitigations included the face coverings policy and the general guideline that teaching events of more than 35 people be online.

- 34.10 Regarding minute 31.2: work with Darwin Building users to reach an acceptable short-term and long-term solution to the basement flooding problem. It was reported that the issue had been included in a consultant's commission report associated with a flood risk paper. It was added that the solution would not be quick or simple.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

35 Covid-19 update

- 35.1 The Government removed the Plan B coronavirus measures from 27 January. UCL reinstated its Interim People Management Guidance with face coverings remaining mandatory inside buildings, except for the exempt. The NHS vaccination centre at Bidborough House remained open and the UCL Connect to Protect service would continue.

36 UCL Covid-19 outbreak response

- 36.1 The Director of Student Support and Wellbeing reported that there had been nine outbreaks in Student Accommodation since the last meeting of WHSC. In the last seven days Connect to Protect had received 310 positive test reports from students and 88 from staff; the week before 162 positive student reports were received and 76 from staff.

37 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions (Paper 4-25)

- 37.1 The Trade Unions requested the extension of the audit of ventilation in teaching rooms to include multi-user offices, a reduction in the maximum occupancy of teaching and office space to take into account the ventilation rate in that room, and the installation of CO₂ monitors in all multi-occupancy spaces where a consistent number of people use the space for over an hour.
- 37.2 In response it was agreed that the impact of the CO₂ monitors already in place and the cost of rolling out the audit programme to multi-user offices would be assessed.

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- 37.3 The Trade Unions raised reports that the mechanical ventilation in the security operations room was so noisy that staff were turning it off. The Trade Unions asked that it be investigated and remedied. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee agreed to report it to the Estates customer helpdesk.
- 37.4 The Trade Unions reported that FFP2 masks no longer seemed to be available on campus. The Convenor responded that supplies would be restocked as soon as possible. It was requested that over-ear loop masks be provided.
- 37.5 The Trade Unions asked that the Committee note and discuss a UCL UCU branch motion passed on 13 January which called for a number of safety measures to be put in place until the Omicron outbreak had subsided.
- 37.6 The Committee noted the motion; the Convenor stated that the measures had already been reviewed both under matters arising and the discussion on specific issues raised in the Trade Unions' paper.

38 Phased removal of Covid-19 measures (Paper 4-26)

- 38.1 The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee presented a paper exploring how UCL would cautiously remove Covid-19 measures, based on positive assumptions of falling infection rates and the resulting easing of restrictions. The paper considered phased reductions including towards the end of February the adjustment of the face covering policy to apply only to teaching events and crowded places. A final phase of measures would be retained indefinitely as part of a broader health and wellbeing campaign.
- 38.2 The Trade Unions disagreed with the re-introduction of the expectation for all staff to work on campus for at least 40% of the time, effective from 27 January.
- 38.3 Regarding the proposed scaling back of enhanced cleaning, the Trade Unions asked for more evidence that the risk of Covid-19 transmission through touching surfaces was lower compared to aerosol transmission. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee agreed to explore the matter further.
- 38.4 Departments would be reminded to undertake Covid-19 compliance inspections of their buildings.

39 Safety Moments

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39.1 Ms Irida Gaikwad and Mr Chris Morgan gave a presentation on Safety Moments, the short conversations that people have with colleagues about safety at the start of a meeting as an opportunity to raise safety awareness.

39.2 The Committee endorsed Safety Moments.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

40 Any other business

40.1 The remaining unheard papers were postponed until the next meeting.

The meeting finished at 3.30pm

Jon Blackman

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