

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee held on  
Tuesday, 4 March, 2015

Present: Ms J Horsburgh (Chair), Mr J Breckon, Dr J Ferrie, Professor T Jones,  
Mrs L McCarthy, Ms G McGrattan

Apologies: Miss R Compton-Davis, Mrs P Glover, Professor L Green

In Attendance: Mr J Phillips (Secretary), Mrs C Farren (Assistant Secretary),  
Professor Andrew Easton (item 27/14-15)

Note: *Restricted business (denoted by an asterisk {\*}) is confidential to members and attendees of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee.*

NOTE: Professor T Jones and Mrs L McCarthy in attendance up until and including Item 25/14-15.

15/14-15 Conflicts of Interest

CONSIDERED

That, should any members or attendees of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared in accordance with the CUC Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK.

RESOLVED

That no conflicts of interest be recorded.

16/14-15 Minutes

CONSIDERED

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2014.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee held on 4 November 2014 be approved.

17/14-15 Function of the Executive Committee

REPORTED: (By the Chair)

(a) That a sub-group meeting had taken place involving the Deputy Director of Governance and Assurance Services, Director of Estates and Dr J Ferrie

which discussed the role and function of the UHSEC and provided some helpful thoughts for further review.

(by Mr J Breckon)

- (b) That clarification of responsibilities and lines of reporting were starting to be addressed at operational level, but there remained a need for further clarity to be provided to those at a senior level.

RESOLVED

That another sub-group meeting takes place in the near future to consider matters further and progress the items discussed.

18/14-15 Interim Director of Health and Safety

REPORTED: (By the Chair)

- (a) That Mr J Phillips had been appointed as Interim Director of Health and Safety.
- (b) That the recruitment to the substantive Director position was in progress and a formal appointment should be made in April or May subject to the outcome of that process.
- (c) That there would be a focus on developing further a positive safety culture in all areas of the University through a drive to improve performance in the four key aspects of culture: Control, Communication, Competence and Cooperation.
- (d) That clarity and consistency of management information was required going forward, to help inform discussion and decision making at UHSEC and at departmental health and safety committees.

19/14-15 Inspection Feedback from Departments

REPORTED: (By Mr J Phillips)

- (a) That meetings with Heads of Department had taken place, however progress in relation to obtaining feedback from Departments on progress against actions post inspection remained slow in some instances.
- (b) That the previously suggested approach of writing to HODs had not been pursued in favour of a more personal interaction and engagement.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Health and Safety Department would tailor an approach suitable for each Department which would have a clear and tangible set of expectations to help facilitate the prompt close out of actions post inspection.
- (b) That the Chair and Professor T Jones would provide support where required.

20/14-15 Management of Internships and the relationship with the Students' Union

REPORTED: (By Mr J Phillips)

That discussions were in progress to engage with relevant stakeholders involved in the Internship Programmes and at the Students' Union on the subject of the University's health and safety expectations, especially in relation to competence and supervisory needs.

RESOLVED

That the Interim Director of Health and Safety be asked to engage with relevant departments to ensure that health and safety considerations be embedded into the internship management programmes and associated policy documentation, including documentation used by those organising and delivering summer schools.

21/14-15 Terms of Reference and Membership 2014/15

CONSIDERED

The Terms of Reference and membership for academic year 2014/15 (UHSEC.08/14-15).

REPORTED

That the Terms of Reference incorporating Mr J Phillips as Secretary in his role as Interim Director of Health and Safety be adopted.

22/14-15 Review of Progress Against Plan

CONSIDERED

A report from the Interim Director of Health and Safety on progress against the strategic health and safety plan for the period November 214 to January 2015 (UHSEC.09/14-15).

REPORTED: (By Mr J Phillips)

- (a) That progress had been made against the plan, however the QuEMIS Hazard Module had experienced some unavoidable technical issues which had delayed its launch.
- (b) That the Quemis system launch had been scheduled for the summer; in the meantime information was being added to the system by the Health and Safety Department including building and fire plans.
- (c) That a streamlined approach to risk profiling, with a focus on hazard mapping would be carried out by the Health and Safety Department prior to engagement with stakeholders.
- (d) That the Gibbet Hill tag system for fire response had been successfully introduced, although further drills were required to help embed the new procedure.

(by Prof T Jones)

- (e) That the experimental Departments should be the initial focus for hazard mapping.
- (f) That the arrangements for the evacuation of buildings to prohibit persons walking through buildings when the alarm is sounding should be investigated.

(by Mrs L McCarthy)

- (g) That the recent gas leak at Gibbet Hill resulted in traffic congestion caused by those leaving the site and the existing road-works and that any lessons learnt from evacuation events should be disseminated.

(by Mr J Breckon)

- (h) That encouraging the reporting of incident and near misses remained a priority.
- (i) That lessons learnt from recent University incidents should be shared with members, for example, the Nottingham University fire which occurred whilst the building was still under the control of the Principal Contractors.

(by Mrs G McGrattan)

- (j) That embedding the University's incident reporting arrangements into any relevant training module connected with the HR system (which is currently being put out to tender) could be examined to raise awareness of the process.

(by the Chair)

- (k) That major incident training involving the fire brigade and police had previously taken place within the University and in terms of residential evacuations that these occur at the start of term each year to ensure all those residing on campus understand the arrangements for evacuation.
- (l) That examining the potential of using Moodle as a platform for hosting generic health and safety training should be considered.

(by Mr J Ferrie)

- (m) That 'press release' type communications targeted at relevant Departments could help raise general health and safety awareness.

#### RESOLVED

- (a) That a focus on hazard mapping, with detailed risk profiling being carried out in priority areas be endorsed.
- (b) That the revised timeline for the summer launch of the QuEMIS system be endorsed.
- (c) That lessons learnt from the Nottingham University fire involving a timber clad building under construction be shared with members once information has been released.

- (d) That future priorities should take into consideration feedback from committee members.

23/14-15 Performance Report

RECEIVED:

A report from the Senior Health and Safety Advisor on reported incidents and inspections carried out for the period October 2014 to January 2015 (UHSEC.10/14-15).

REPORTED: (By Mrs C Farren)

- (a) That slips, trips and falls (on the level), manual handling (primarily associated with the handling of glassware) and incidents involving contractors were the three incident categories most commonly reported to the Health and Safety Department.
- (b) That in comparison with other HE Institutions, the University of Warwick reports a similar incident rate for students, but a higher rate for staff, which is considered to be associated with the University directly employing a higher proportion of staff involved in manual tasks (e.g. portering and cleaning).
- (c) That health and safety inspections have demonstrated three general areas for priority attention which include a need for improved housekeeping; a need for greater clarity in relation to the responsibility for and frequency of maintenance and testing of equipment and a need for sufficient local information to be made available in relation to procedures/laboratory rules.
- (d) That fire and false alarm data showed a continuing downward trend, with some minor fluctuations.

(by Mr J Phillips)

- (e) That the underreporting of incidents remained a concern generally, although some Departments, such as CCSG, were considered good at reporting, indicating differences in culture across the institution.
- (f) That standard sets of health and safety Management Information (MI) would be developed and shared with Departments on a regular basis.
- (g) That the incident involving a member of the public falling between levels in Car Park 7, not reflected in the incident statistics (given the time period under review), had resulted in mesh screens being installed to prevent a recurrence.

24/14-15 Framework for Health and Safety

CONSIDERED

A report from the Interim Director of Health and Safety on how responsibilities for health and safety might be delegated through line management and managed with departments (UHSEC.11/14-15).

REPORTED: (By Mr J Phillips)

- (a) That a framework which sets out a department's statement of intent, how they organise themselves for health and safety management and which captures their local arrangements would formalise responsibilities within departments and improve local ownership of health and safety.
- (b) That practical health and safety 'tools' and competence frameworks established to help those responsible would enable appropriate actions to be taken to raise standards.
- (c) That many academic departments have already identified the need to improve the safety culture through the use of responsibility and competence frameworks.
- (d) That there was recognised good practice already in place in some areas, and this process could help the development of a consistent approach.

(by the Chair)

- (e) That there was a need to ensure that a consistent approach was being taken.

(by Mr J Ferrie)

- (f) That this work should be given priority.

(by Mrs L McCarthy)

- (g) That completion of a framework prior to the next Faculty Board meeting would be recommended.
- (h) That such a framework had previously been in place within WMS; the arrangements of which was agreed to be shared with the Health and Safety Department.

RESOLVED

That the approach recommended be endorsed and given priority attention.

25/14-15 New Build and Refurbishment Projects

RECEIVED

An oral report by the Director of Estates advising the Committee on the ongoing management of health and safety associated with the programme of new build and refurbishment projects, including discussions at ORMG and progress of a sub-group tasked with the oversight of the risks associated with capital build projects.

REPORTED: (by Mr J Breckon)

- (a) That the NAIC contractual negotiations were progressing with an anticipated start date on site of April of this year.
- (b) That the new Teaching and Learning building scheduled for development on the Tocil Fields would also start on site in April.

- (c) That construction remained ongoing with regards to the piazza, bus terminal and road-works, as well as the WBS building.
- (d) That the Code of Conduct for contractors which restates the University's health and safety expectations when working on campus had been issued to the supply chain.
- (e) That a construction specific Health and Safety Advisor had been advertised to support the Estates Department; the post-holder having a dotted line into the Health and Safety Department.
- (f) That fifty Estates staff had recently passed the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Managing Safely course in order to raise health and safety awareness.
- (g) That there had been a drive to create a more open culture within Estates which would hope to improve incident reporting.
- (h) That a subgroup from ORMG had met to support the capital build project where mechanisms to tackle culture were discussed. Matters were now being considered by members of the Estates Operational Management group which will feed back into ORMG.

(by Mr J Ferrie)

- (i) That there could be value in developing a vision and a set of values for health and safety culture, bringing together a range of initiatives and demonstrating what an exemplary safety culture would look like.

(by Mrs G McGrattan)

- (j) That to improve the culture, staff would need to be clear on what would be expected of them which should include the benefits that can be brought about by a positive safety culture.

(by Mr J Phillips)

- (k) That the need to change culture and how this may be achieved had been discussed at meetings with Heads of Department.
- (l) That a 'strapline', or vision, and a set of values that could be used to provide clarity of purpose and focus on health and safety was being considered.

26/14-15 University Health and Safety Committee

RECEIVED

A report from the meeting of the University Health and Safety Committee held on 12 February 2015 (UHSEC.12/14-15).

REPORTED: (By Mr J Phillips)

- (a) That Committee members considered themselves as 'champions' of health and safety and as a consequence agreed to support the dissemination of health and safety information within their respective Faculties and Departments.

- (b) That liaison between committee meetings was welcomed for expediting consultation on policies and arrangements.
- (c) That the sharing of information between members relating to good health and safety practice, lessons learnt and sector guidance would take place.

27/14-15 \*University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee

\*Chair reminded members that the contents of this paper makes reference to material that is confidential and must be treated as 'restricted business'.

RECEIVED

An oral report from the Chair of the GMBSC along with a paper on the meeting of the University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee (GMBSC) held on 25 February 2015 (UHSEC.13/14-15)\* {Restricted}.

REPORTED: (By Chair of GMBSC)

- (a) That the appointment of the new Biosafety Adviser should help with the workload which was noted in the paper as having increased.
- (b) That changes to the regulations had removed the need for all biological activities to go through the GMBSC, so that only the higher risk, AC2 and AC3 now needed consideration by members.
- (c) That the Interim Biosafety Advisor had been approving AC1 hazard activities on behalf of the committee which has enabled a lot of research activities to progress promptly post submission of a suitable and sufficient biological risk assessment.
- (d) That the diversity of projects requiring committee approval necessitated the recruitment of new members which would be reflected in a further revision to the Terms of Reference and Membership.
- (e) That there had been a significant increase in projects being received for consideration, potentially associated with an increase in new work, amendments to existing research projects, and/or acknowledgement of the approval process.
- (f) That a further presentation to staff and students was scheduled in an aim to raise awareness of the process.
- (g) That the Safe Operating Procedures relating to work involving tissue of human origin was approved by the GMBSC; these now incorporate the GMBSC into the process and state clearly what the process of approval is for those embarking on work in this area.
- (h) That the SAPO licence had been revoked following the destruction of an animal pathogen that was originally only licenced to be stored on campus.
- (i) That there was recognition that more Departments were working with biological material and a need to further raise awareness of process.
- (j) That the Registrar was the University HTA licence holder and a further 370 staff (and students) currently hold a licence to work with human tissue.

(by Mrs G McGrattan)

- (k) That staff records held within Human Resources did not include licences held or details in relation to types of materials that persons were exposed to or potential health risks associated with their line of work.

(by Mr J Ferrie)

- (l) That the University may wish to consider linking records held with Occupational Health and those in Human Resources and examine whether records are held of all vaccinations.

28/14-15 Dates of Future Meetings

The forthcoming meeting of the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year is follows:

Thursday, 11 June 2015      10.30am – 12.30pm      CMR1.2, University House