

# Student Safety

## Introduction

- 1 This Health and Safety Notice should be read and understood by all appropriate employees of Oxford Brookes University.

It should also be read and understood by all members of the student body.

- 2 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 in general, and the University's Statement of Policy (OBUHSN-1) specifically, lay down a personal responsibility for Health and Safety for all students.

Broadly, students:

- (a) are responsible for the safety of operations under their control;
- (b) must always comply with relevant statutory requirements and codes of practice;
- (c) are responsible for following safe working practices and for taking a personal interest in promoting health and safety at work.

This Health and Safety Notice (OBUHSN-12) specifies in more detail what these responsibilities are.

- 3 Each student must familiarise himself or herself with, and implement University Safety Policy (OBUHSN-1) and the Safety Policy(ies) (see OBUHSN-02) of any Department/Faculty of the University in which he or she works or studies. Students must be familiar with any amendments or addenda to those policies. In-so-far as they perceive that those policies are deficient, students should make recommendations for improvement individually or through Departmental/Faculty staff, student representatives, or the Students' Union to improve both the policy and its implementation.
- 4 Students must know what action to take on discovering a casualty or any other emergency situation or on hearing a fire alarm. They must know University and Department/Faculty procedures for reporting accidents or any kind of dangerous occurrence. (OBUHSN-9 and OBUHSN-11).
- 5 Students must conduct themselves responsibly and safely at work in any Department/Faculty and generally on University property. They must ensure that their actions or omissions do not endanger the health and safety of themselves, staff, other students, visitors or the general public.
- 6 Students shall not intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse, anything provided by the University in the interests of Health, Safety or Welfare (Health and Safety at Work Act Section 8). Such damage to safety equipment constitutes a criminal offence and at least will result in disciplinary action.
- 7 Each student must familiarise himself or herself with the location of first aid equipment, the identity and location of trained and qualified First Aiders and the procedures for calling a doctor or emergency services in all areas of the University which that student habitually uses.
- 8 Students must seek and follow advice, where appropriate, from the University Safety Officer, Occupational Health Nurse and/or Departmental or Specialist Health and Safety Advisers.

- 9 Students must not use any apparatus or equipment until they have received instruction from a properly qualified and responsible member of staff as to how to use it safely.

**Nobody must ever start a machine unless they know how to stop it  
in an emergency.**

- 10 Students must, at all times, wear such protective clothing as is appropriate for any work or activity which they undertake.
- 11 Students must report any apparently or potentially dangerous situation, apparatus, equipment or building immediately to the University Safety Officer or Department/Faculty Safety Adviser. Further, students must take any reasonable steps to minimise the hazard. In the event of the appropriate officer or advisor not being immediately available then there is an absolute requirement promptly to notify a member of Departmental/Faculty staff or a member of the Senior Management Team.

### **Student projects**

- 12 Where student projects are concerned, effective or adequate supervision does not necessarily (or even usually) mean constant attendance. Also, where attendance is necessary, this can be carried out by the supervisor or his/her authorised nominee. This authorised nominee can be a suitably qualified member of academic or technical staff. There are no hard and fast rules on what does constitute adequate supervision in a variety of circumstances, but there are fundamental elements upon which supervisors must satisfy themselves. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the project is properly assessed (OBUHSN-36):
- a) for compliance with existing Department/Faculty procedures;
  - b) for general risks to health and safety under the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1974, or other such as COSHH, Noise, DSE and Manual Handling Regulations. These regulations require a written risk assessment. If after a risk assessment it is decided that the risk is minimal this fact needs to be recorded;
  - c) for compliance with any University Health and Safety Notices, Codes of Practice or Guidance Notes.
- 13 Any precautions which are necessary are agreed between the supervisor and student. In all but the most elementary circumstances they should be committed to written protocol.
- 14 Regular checks must be carried out by the supervisor to see that the student is actually following the agreed procedures.
- 15 It must be made clear to the students that:
- a) alterations in method must be documented and discussed rather than casually introduced without the supervisor's knowledge;
  - b) the students also have legal responsibilities not to endanger themselves and others by their actions.

### **Hazardous substances**

The following is extracted from OBUHSN-19, Issue 5. It is important that all students whose courses involve the use of chemicals should read and understand OBUHSN-19, Issue 2 and its appendices. References to the relevant appendices are given in the extract below but the appendices are not included in this booklet.

- 1 This Health and Safety Notice must be read and understood by all appropriate employees of Oxford Brookes University. It should be brought to the attention of members of the student body, especially those where the use of chemicals forms an integral part of their studies. Where appropriate, it must also be brought to the attention of contractors staff working at the University.

- 2 The safe use, handling and storage of chemicals and chemical substances at Oxford Brookes University demands a positive and sustained realisation of the hazards involved. This involves all materials used or generated out of or in connection with any work activity under the control of the University (eg research, student studies, general laboratory work, cleaning, maintenance etc). Chemical laboratories involve the use of a wider range of chemical substances than do most other work places, and some of the hazards involved call for precautions not ordinarily encountered elsewhere. Chemists, by virtue of their professional training and work experience, should be more aware of the hazard presented by the use of chemicals, and be prepared to deal with substances known to be, or suspected of being, hazardous. Many hazardous substances, some identified only by an obscure trade-name, are widely used in other workplaces not always equipped to deal with a spill or other emergency.
- 3 It is essential, therefore, before commencing any programme of work that persons involved should be aware of and understand the potential hazards associated with all the materials to be used. If unfamiliar with the materials and the associated risks, they must seek expert advice from their supervisor, Department/Faculty Safety Adviser, Poisons and Hazardous Materials Advisor, Occupational Health Nurse or the Safety Officer. If necessary, local rules should be devised and formally published for the use, handling and storage of hazardous and/or unfamiliar materials.
- 4 Consideration must also be given to the potential hazards associated with any chemical reaction, reference being made to recorded experience of chemical reactions that have a potential for danger. The products of a reaction may be much more dangerous than the initial reactants (eg bleach and lavatory cleaner).
- 5 The most important step to be taken in securing the safe handling of any hazardous material is to ensure that a proper system of labelling is used that will identify the substance and indicate any associated hazards.

## **Responsibilities**

- 6 The Head of a Department or Faculty will be responsible for making whatever arrangements may be considered necessary to acquaint their staff with the hazards associated with all materials to be used, handled, stored or disposed of within their area, and to provide such local safety rules as may be necessary. It is recommended practice that the precautions listed in the various Regulations and Statutory provisions be followed.
- 7 The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) are intended to protect employees and others against substances which are hazardous to health and of any form (solid, liquid, gas, fume, vapour) and include:
  - (a) All those substances listed as being Very Toxic, Toxic, Harmful, Irritant, Corrosive (as defined in the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging) Regulations 1993 (CHIP));
  - (b) Any other substance listed in the Authorised and Approved List;
  - (c) All substances with a published maximum exposure limit or occupational exposure standard;
  - (d) Hazardous microorganisms and allergens;
  - (e) All dusts;
  - (f) Any other substance with a comparable hazard.

Practical guidance on the Regulations is given in some detail in approved Codes of practice and other specific guidance published by the HSE.

- 8 No Department/Faculty may carry on any work liable to expose staff, students or others to substances hazardous to their health unless a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks created by that work, and the steps needed to comply with COSHH in respect of it, has been made. The basic principles of the COSHH Regulations are:
  - (a) Assess the risk to health arising from any work activities associated with hazardous substances. A copy of all assessments must be sent to the Safety Officer;
  - (b) Introduce appropriate measures to prevent or control the risk;

- (c) Ensure that effective control measures are used and that any equipment installed and used for such purposes is properly maintained and the correct procedures observed;
- (d) The assessment must be reviewed if there is reason to suspect that it is no longer valid or there has been a significant change in the work to which the assessment applies. All assessments must be reviewed annually and a report submitted to the Safety Officer;
- (e) Where necessary, monitor the exposure of the workers and carry out an appropriate form of surveillance of their health;
- (f) The type and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be carefully assessed and will only be used as a last resort or as a back up measure;
- (g) Inform, instruct and train employees, students and others about the risks and the precautions to be taken.

**Assessment** is the essential first stage of any strategy to achieve these objects.

- 9 Control over the acquisition and use of Poisonous Substances is governed by the Poisons Act 1972 together with the Poisons Rules and Poisons Lists Orders which have been or may be issued and amended from time to time under the authority of the Secretary of State, Home Office. Whilst these relate primarily to retail pharmacies and are not directly applicable to Oxford Brookes University, they nevertheless form useful guidelines in determining which materials justify special control. The Head of Faculty or Department or an appointed Poisons Officer alone will be responsible for the acquisition, safe custody, control and use of all Scheduled materials, except those drugs for which a license is required. All such materials must be safely stored in a suitable locked cupboard in accordance with legal requirements and local regulations. Any person required to use Scheduled Materials must be sufficiently knowledgeable to use them safely.

### **Material storage, handling and waste disposal**

- 10 Many materials can pose problems if stored incorrectly or by virtue of the overall quantity of material involved. It may also be important to isolate certain materials from each other because of the possible danger of interaction. It is important to follow the manufacturers' instructions on methods of storage. It is important to restrict the quantities of chemicals held within buildings and laboratories to that minimum amount consistent with efficient working requirements and the hazards involved. Legislation exists on the storage of some substances such as those that are Highly Flammable. A central Chemical Store has been provided for use by all University Faculties/Departments. This store is under the supervision of the Faculty of the Biological and Molecular Sciences Safety Advisor. He/she should be contacted in order to arrange storage facility in the Store.
- 11 Hazardous waste must be disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's/supplier's instructions. Where necessary the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Advisor can arrange for the disposal of hazardous substances. Any substance that requires disposal by the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Safety Advisor must be correctly labelled and packaged.
- 12 The number of compressed gas cylinders kept within a building should be kept to an absolute minimum. A storage cage for surplus cylinders is available adjacent to the Chemical Store.
- 13 Basic rules for the use, handling, disposal and storage of chemicals are given as an appendix to Health and Safety Notice OBUHSN-19.

### **Electrical safety**

- 1 Students must not interfere with any electrical installation, and only use Oxford Brookes University electrical equipment that they have been trained to use and/or are authorised to use.
- 2 Students' own electrical equipment is their responsibility, and the equipment must meet the latest electrical requirements. It must be safe, regularly maintained, and not capable of injuring other people. Any personal electrical equipment in use in a Hall of Residence or Hostel that is found to be unsafe will be removed and repaired at the student's expense.

## **Noise at work**

- 1 This Health and Safety Notice should be read and understood by all appropriate employees of the Oxford Brookes University. It must also be read and understood by members of the student body. Where appropriate, it must also be brought to the attention of contractors' staff working at the University.

## **Legal responsibilities**

- 2 The Noise at Work Regulations 1989 (SI 1989 No.1790) came into force on 1 January 1990 in order to comply with European Community Directive 86/188/EEC.

These Regulations apply to all workplaces and require employers to carry out assessments of the noise levels within their premises and to take appropriate preventive action where necessary.

- 3 The Regulations define two exposure action levels:

- (a) Lower Exposure Action Levels: a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 80dB(A), a peak sound pressure of 135 dB(C)
- (b) Upper Exposure Action Levels: a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 85dB(A), a peak sound pressure of 137 dB(C)

Exposure Limit values: a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 87 dB(A), a peak sound pressure of 140 dB(C)

The Exposure Limit values is the maximum permitted exposure with ear protection in place.

- 4 Irrespective of action levels, Regulation 6 requires the University to reduce the risk of damage to the hearing of its employees from exposure to noise to the lowest level reasonably practicable.
- 5 Under Regulation 4, the University is required to make adequate arrangements for the assessment of exposure where this is likely to be at or above the first or peak action levels, so that all staff working in the areas concerned can be adequately informed of the steps which can or must be taken to protect their hearing. The assessments should be made by a competent person who should be able to advise on any action needed to reduce the noise levels to the lowest level reasonably practicable in compliance with the regulations.
- 6 Where daily noise exposure is likely to be at or above the second or peak action levels the University is required under Regulation 7 to ensure that exposure is reduced to the lowest level practicable other than by the provision of personal ear protectors.
- 7 Noise assessment must be reviewed when there has either been a significant change in the work to which the assessment relates or wherever there is reason to suspect that the assessment is no longer valid.
- 8 Under Regulation 5, steps must be taken to ensure that an adequate record of the assessment and/or any review is kept.
- 9 As an employer, the University is required to ensure that any protective equipment that they are obliged to provide is maintained in an efficient state.
- 10 Employees are required so far as is reasonably practicable to make full and proper use of anything, including ear protectors, which are provided for their protection. Any defects in equipment should be reported immediately.

## **Eye protection**

- 1 This Health and Safety Notice must be read and understood by all employees of Oxford Brookes University.  
It must also be read by and understood by members of the student body, especially those engaged in studies or projects where there is a real risk from chemical splashes, vapours or from flying fragments or particles. Where appropriate, it must also be brought to the attention of contractors' staff working at the University.
- 2 Human eyes are irreplaceable and easily damaged by flying particles, corrosive substances and many other chemicals. It is, therefore, imperative that eye protection must be worn whenever there is a risk of damage to the eyes.

In general, it will be University policy that if the risks within a workplace can be considered such as to make eye protection desirable although not necessarily essential within the statutory regulations, then it is recommended that it should be made mandatory.

- 3 All staff and students at the University who have monocular vision or other eye defects and who work in laboratories or other work areas where there is an inherent risk of damage to the eyes must wear safety spectacles at all times.
- 4 Wearers of contact lenses should seek advice from the Occupational Health Nurse or the Health & Safety Officer on the advisability of wearing such lenses in eye protection areas, especially those involved in the use and handling of chemicals.
- 5 Spectacle wearers are in some measure protected by their own spectacles. If by the nature of their work they are required to wear eye protection, this may be covered by the wearing of suitable eye protection over the individuals own spectacles. If there is a real danger of damage to personal spectacles, prescription lens safety spectacles with lateral shields will be provided.

Where such safety spectacles are provided by the University, these are safety equipment supplied in pursuance of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and must not be altered or damaged in any way (HASAWA 1974 Section 8). Any such action is an offence under the Act and may result in disciplinary action.

### **Statutory requirements**

- 6 The use of Eye Protection is governed by the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (PPE).
- 7 The PPE Regulations 1992 (Regulation 4) state that:  
  
"every employer shall ensure that suitable personal protective equipment is provided to his employees who may be exposed to a risk to their health or safety while at work except where and to the extent that such a risk has been adequately controlled by means which are equally or more effective."

### **Eye protection areas**

- 8 The work being undertaken in some areas of the University may create a significant hazard to the eyes of anyone within that area. In these circumstances, the Head of Faculty or his/her nominee will designate the area as an "EYE PROTECTION AREA". Examples will include laboratories where acids or other dangerous liquids or substances are frequently handled, machine shops, grinding shops, battery rooms and any area where liquid metal may be used.
- 9 In Eye Protection Areas, all personnel must wear the eye protection provided or required. Appropriate safety signs must be posted at the entrance to those areas and a stock of eye protectors must be kept by the member of staff in charge of the area for issue to students and visitors.

- 10 Where operations requiring eye protection are being carried out on a temporary or intermittent basis, temporary eye protection areas will be designated and appropriate signs displayed for the period of the work.
- 11 Eye Protection for use with laser hazards must be appropriate to the hazards concerned with the specific equipment being used. Advice must be sought from the University Laser Officer.

### **Head of Department/Faculties responsibilities**

- 1 The Heads of Departments/Faculties through their line management or Departmental/Faculty Safety Advisers, will be responsible for identifying eye hazards arising from work in their areas and for ensuring that the most suitable precautions are taken to minimise the risk of eye injury. The wearing of suitable eye protection is mandatory:
  - (a) in all places where the processes covered by paragraphs 7 and 8 above are carried out;
  - (b) in all areas designated as EYE PROTECTION AREAS (paragraphs 9 to 12).

### **Head protection**

- 1 This Health and Safety Notice should be read and understood by all employees of Oxford Brookes University. It should also be read by and understood by members of the student body. Where appropriate, it must also be brought to the attention of Contractors' staff working at the University.
- 2 It is important to wear suitable head protection, so far as is reasonably practicable, in order to safeguard against foreseeable risks of injury to the head from falling objects. Head protection must also be worn when because of the nature of the work environment, eg confined space, there is a danger from striking the head on roofbeams, pipework or other protrusions. Staff and students engaged on field studies in such locations as quarries etc. must wear head protection where the circumstances demand.

### **Statutory requirements**

- 3 The Construction (Head Protection) Regulations 1989 (SI 1989 No.2209) came into force on 30 March 1990 and apply to building operations and works of engineering construction as defined in the Factories Act 1961, and the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (PPE) came into force on 1 January 1993.

Building operation means the construction, structural alteration, repair or maintenance of a building (including re-pointing, redecoration and external cleaning of the structure), the demolition of a building, and the preparation for, and laying the foundation of, an intended building, but does not include any operation which is a work of engineering construction. Work of engineering construction does not for the most part apply to the University. The PPE Regulations state every employer shall ensure that suitable personal protective equipment is provided to his employees who may be exposed to a risk to their health or safety while at work except where and to the extent that such a risk has been adequately controlled by means which are equally or more effective.

### **Head protection areas**

- 4 Workplaces designated as HEAD PROTECTION AREAS must be marked by the erection of the appropriate safety signs. Admission to the area must be restricted to those persons wearing approved head protection.

### **Classification and maintenance of head protectors**

- 5 There are two classes of head protection:
  - 5.1 Safety Helmets give some degree of protection from falling objects and the hazards normally found in a working environment.

- 5.2 Bump Hats are intended to give limited protection from bumps and collisions when working in confined spaces.
- 6 There must be no unauthorised modification or construction of protective helmets. Helmets of appropriate patterns are available from relevant Departments/Faculties.
- 7 Protective headgear is likely to be damaged by contact with paint, solvents, adhesives, some aerosol sprays and prolonged exposure to strong sunlight. Therefore, when not in use protective helmets should be kept in a clean location away from direct heat or strong sunlight.
- 8 Regardless of the care given to them safety helmets have a limited life. Their date of manufacture should be marked under the peak of each helmet. The maximum life for a helmet is five years but this is dependant on the care taken in use and storage. A helmet beyond its useful life or one which has been involved in an accident should immediately be discarded and destroyed to prevent its further use.

#### **Head of Department/Faculties responsibility**

- 9 The Heads of Departments/Faculties, through their line management or Departmental/Faculty Safety Advisers, will be responsible for identifying head hazards arising from work in their areas and for ensuring that the most suitable precautions are taken to minimise the risk of head injury. The wearing of suitable head protection is mandatory:
  - a) in Head Protection Areas (paragraph 4);
  - b) in all places specified in (paragraph 2).

For further information about these regulations, please contact the Safety Officer.

Last updated: Tim McGill, 28 July 2014