



THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Safety Policy

香港中文大學

工作安全政策



THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

SAFETY POLICY

Approved by AAPC on May 14, 2013

Mission

At CUHK, high standards of occupational safety and health are integral management objectives on a par with excellence in teaching and research. CUHK recognizes that the benefits to be gained from successful occupational safety and health programmes are great, both in human and monetary terms. CUHK is devoted to cultivating a positive safety culture through the concerted efforts of all Departments/Units.

1. Shared Responsibility

- 1.1 The primary responsibility for ensuring safety at work and at study lies with every individual member of staff and every student, who are expected to discharge their tasks in compliance with legislation, established professional codes of practice and University guidelines, and to exercise common sense in having regard for the safety of self and others. Teachers are in particular responsible for making appropriate efforts to ensure safety for students in instructional contexts, and all members of the University are responsible for bringing safety issues to the attention of Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads, and where necessary also the University authorities.
- 1.2 While the emphasis will be on support and education rather than regulation, individuals must still be reminded that breaches of legislation, professional codes of practice and University guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

2. Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads

- 2.1 Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads will be responsible for ensuring that all reasonably practicable actions are taken within their Faculties/Schools/Departments/Units. The operational guidelines on the handling of safety matters for Deans/Department Chairmen/Unit Heads are given in Appendix A. They will normally be regarded as the “Responsible Persons” for their Faculties/Schools/Departments/Units as defined in the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance and subsidiary regulations. Some responsibilities can be further delegated, provided appropriate resources are allocated and authority is delegated as well. However, delegation does not change the overall responsibilities, which are to
 - identify and minimize the risk of all types of work-related events that may produce injury or illness;
 - identify, quantify, and control to safe levels those agents in the work environment that may cause ill-health;
 - promote the good health and welfare of staff members and students while respecting at all times the privacy of individuals;
 - provide a safe working environment and pay attention to potential safety and health problems such as noise, lighting, air quality and ventilation;
 - ensure that adequate provision is made in the units’ budget to cater to safety requirements;

- provide information, instruction and training for staff members and students to increase personal understanding of workplace hazards, including safe working practices;
- involve staff members and students in occupational safety and health matters, and consult with them in ways to reduce workplace hazards;
- protect members of the public and authorized visitors from potentially adverse health effects associated with the operation of CUHK activities;
- report safety matters that require University-level attention.

2.2 To cope with the above safety responsibilities, Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads should as necessary

- set up their own safety organizations (e.g. safety committees);
- run safety training programmes;
- maintain safety-related registers (including the After Hours Access Log Book);
- conduct risk assessments and safety inspections.

2.3 **Laboratory-based Departments** should in addition

- develop their own safety manuals, which should include guidelines and training on the risk assessment programme;
- develop and maintain records of risk assessment and safety inspection concerning the teaching/research laboratories, which should also be copied to the University Safety Office for information and action.

2.4 For **non-laboratory-related activities**

- Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads should pay attention to potential safety and health problems such as manual handling operation, clear fire egress routes and use of chemicals. Relevant issues should be brought to the SAC (General) and/or SAC (Chemical/Carcinogens) as appropriate for attention.

2.5 To enhance safety awareness, Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads should post the mission statement and any other essential information in the workplaces.

2.6 Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads are required to report all accidents/incidents to the University Safety Office, including accidents/incidents of a minor nature that do not require assistance from other University units. Reciprocally, Faculties/Schools/Departments/Units will be informed by the University Safety Office of accidents/incidents that have occurred in their workplaces or to their staff. Department Chairmen should also report all matters concerning safety within their departments to their respective Deans.

2.7 Each Faculty/School/Department/Unit should appoint a Safety Coordinator, except for small units which may choose to be affiliated with another unit for this purpose (in which case they should inform

the University Safety Office). Larger Faculty/School/Department/Unit may additionally appoint a Safety Committee, of which the Safety Coordinator should be secretary. The duties of the Safety Coordinators/ Safety Committees are listed in Appendix B.

2.8 If the Deans, Department Chairmen or Unit Heads need professional advice, the University Safety Office should be consulted.

3. University Safety Office

3.1 The University Safety Office, headed by the Director, USO, and reporting to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, is the focal point for internal coordination and external liaison (including liaison with government regulatory bodies) on all matters related to safety. The structure of the University Safety Office and the duties of the Director, USO, are in Appendix C.

3.2 The duties of the University Safety Office are principally to advise units of statutory requirements related to safety and to help units in their efforts to enhance safety, but where necessary it will also act as a regulatory body. Thus, the Director, USO, has the authority to forbid immediately the use of a particular substance, procedure or instrument, or to shut down a particular laboratory or work site. This authority is accorded to the Director, USO, who should convey the decision and the reason for doing so to a designated Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the Dean, the Department Chairman or the Unit Head concerned, and where necessary also the Security Office. Appeals against such decisions should be made to the Chairman of the Committee on Safety, but the activities must nevertheless stop in the interim. There is also a statutory requirement to report serious incidents to the appropriate government department(s), and such reports should be copied to the University Secretary for record.

4. Safety responsibilities of specific offices

The following administrative units have been assigned special responsibilities for various aspects of safety; Faculties, Schools, Departments and Units should consult these offices as appropriate:

Activity	Office responsible
Road design, construction, maintenance	Campus Development Office and Estates Management Office
Road management	Security Office
Bus operation	Transport Office
Fire prevention/fire fighting/fire drills	Estates Management Office and Security Office
Construction and building safety	Campus Development Office/Estates Management Office (and contractors)
Safety signs and symbols in public areas	Estates Management Office
Emergency care and first-aid training	University Health Service
Accident and Incident Report	University Safety Office
Statutory reporting requirements on Employees' Compensation	Personnel Office
Safety management training for Department Chairmen/Safety Coordinators	University Safety Office

Risk assessment/self inspection guidelines	University Safety Office
Monitoring the standardization of labelling/ colour-code system for waste containers	University Safety Office
Radiation Protection	University Safety Office
Emergency response (24 hours)	Security Office

5. Safety Committees

University policy on safety is formulated by a number of committees.

- The **Administrative and Planning Committee (AAPC)** is responsible for overall policy matters, and ultimate adjudication in cases of dispute.
- The **Committee on Safety** (Appendix D)¹ is responsible for safety matters related to the workplace. It has established the following Safety Advisory Committees (SAC):
 - SAC (Radiation/Electrical)]
 - SAC (Chemical/Carcinogens)] Appendix E
 - SAC (Biological)]
 - SAC (Environmental Hygiene)]
 - SAC (General)] Appendix F

6. Resource Allocation

- 6.1 The provision of a safe working environment requires a reasonable level of resources. At CUHK, academic departments and many administrative units operate under a system of one-line budgets; these units are given an overall budget annually, and have the freedom and the responsibility to manage their own finances, under broad guidelines. The level of one-line budgets is designed to contain provisions for routine and expected expenditure on safety, including the necessary equipment, consumables and maintenance, as well as a level of staff time devoted to matters concerning safety. Faculties/Schools/ Departments/Units must therefore place safety as a top priority in their own budgetary planning; where safety is not adequately provided for, Faculties/Schools/ Departments/Units must make decisions for other activities to be deferred or reduced.
- 6.2 Major and non-routine expenditures related to safety are not meant to be absorbed into departmental one-line budgets, but Faculties/Schools/Departments/Units are nevertheless responsible for planning ahead of time, and bringing the needs to the attention of the University with an adequate lead time for management. The responsible bodies for resource allocation and the annual schedule are shown in Appendix G.

¹ Established in June 1998, the Committee on Safety superseded the former Committee on Laboratory Safety.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

- Operational guidelines on the handling of Safety Matters for Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads

Appendix B

- Duties of Safety Coordinators/Safety Committees in Faculties, Schools, Departments and Units

Appendix C

- Structure of the University Safety Office and duties of the Director, USO

Appendix D

- Composition and terms of reference of the Committee on Safety

Appendix E

- Composition and terms of reference of SAC (Radiation/Electrical), SAC (Chemical/Carcinogens), SAC (Biological), SAC (Environmental Hygiene)

Appendix F

- Composition and terms of reference of SAC (General)

Appendix G

- Responsible bodies for resource allocation and the annual schedule

NOTE:

Approved by AAPC at its 6th (2013) meeting held on May 14, 2013.

Operational Guidelines on the Handling of Safety Matters for Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads

Interpretation of “Reasonably Practicable Action”

1. Reasonably practicable action shall mean action taken to prevent accidents that are:
 - (a) foreseeable, and
 - (b) capable of being prevented.

The lack of resources is not acceptable as a reason for inaction, since there is always the option of stopping the activity.

2. In case of doubt, Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads should seek advice from the Director, USO.

Authority to stop activities

3. Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads, in being delegated with the responsibility to take reasonably practicable action to prevent the occurrence of accidents that may produce injury or illness, must also be given the corresponding authority to take such action, which may include, where necessary, the closure of laboratories and the cessation of certain activities. Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads should designate their own chains of command to ensure orderly function in the event of incidents. In general, Deans/Chairmen/Heads always have the authority to manage affairs in their Faculties/ Schools/ Departments/ Units, but in order that checks and balances are maintained, the following operational guidelines should be followed.
4. In ***situations involving imminent serious danger***, where action needs to be taken immediately, Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads (or their designates) should order laboratories/offices/workplaces closed or activities stopped, and where such orders are given, they should be followed without argument. After the immediate emergency is over, advice should be sought from the Director, USO, as to whether the laboratory/office/workplace can be re-opened or the activities resumed, and if so, under what conditions. If the matter cannot be resolved, the member(s) of staff whose laboratory/office/workplace is closed or whose activities are stopped may lodge an appeal to the Chairman of the Committee on Safety. Such authority to close laboratories or stop activities is also independently vested in the Director, USO, (Safety Policy paragraph 3.2), but it is recognized that the University Safety Office may not be immediately aware of some emergency situations.
5. In ***situations not involving imminent serious danger***, Deans, Department Chairmen and Unit Heads (or their designates) are expected first to seek the advice of the Director, USO, who will in turn advise the member(s) of staff involved to take corrective action. Where such action is not taken within a reasonable period, the Dean, Department Chairman or Unit Head should formally recommend to the Director, USO, that the laboratory be closed or the activities stopped, and in so doing will be deemed to have discharged his/her duties in ensuring all reasonably practicable actions have been taken. It will then be up to the Director, USO, to order such closure of laboratories or cessation of activities as appropriate.
6. Deans, Department Chairmen or Unit Heads may also wish to take action for reasons other than safety, for example, noise, pollution, re-allocation of laboratories, cessation of certain activities during particular periods, etc. Most of these cases will not be controversial, but for cases that may give rise to disputes, endorsement from the departmental executive committees should be sought.

Duties of Safety Coordinators/ Safety Committees in Faculties, Schools, Departments and Units

Each Faculty/School/Department/Unit should appoint a Safety Coordinator, except for small units which may choose to be affiliated with another unit for this purpose (in which case they should inform the University Safety Office). Larger Faculty/School/Department/Unit may additionally appoint a Safety Committee, of which the Safety Coordinator should be secretary.

Role and functions of Safety Coordinators/Safety Committees in Faculties, Schools, Departments and Units

Safety coordinators/Safety Committees need to have the status and competence to advise the management and the employees of the Faculties, Schools, Departments or Units with authority and independence. They should be well placed to advise on:

- Formulating and developing the Faculties', Schools', Departments' or Units' safety policies, not just for existing activities but also with respect to new acquisitions or processes;
- How their Faculties, Schools, Departments or Units can promote a positive safety and health culture and secure the effective implementation of the safety policy;
- Planning for safety and health including the setting of realistic short- and long-term objectives, deciding priorities and establishing adequate systems and performance standards;
- Day-to-day implementation and monitoring of policy and plans including accident and incident investigation, reporting and analysis; and
- Review of performance and audit of the whole safety and health management system.

To do this properly, Safety Coordinators/Safety Committees in Faculties, Schools, Departments and Units need to:

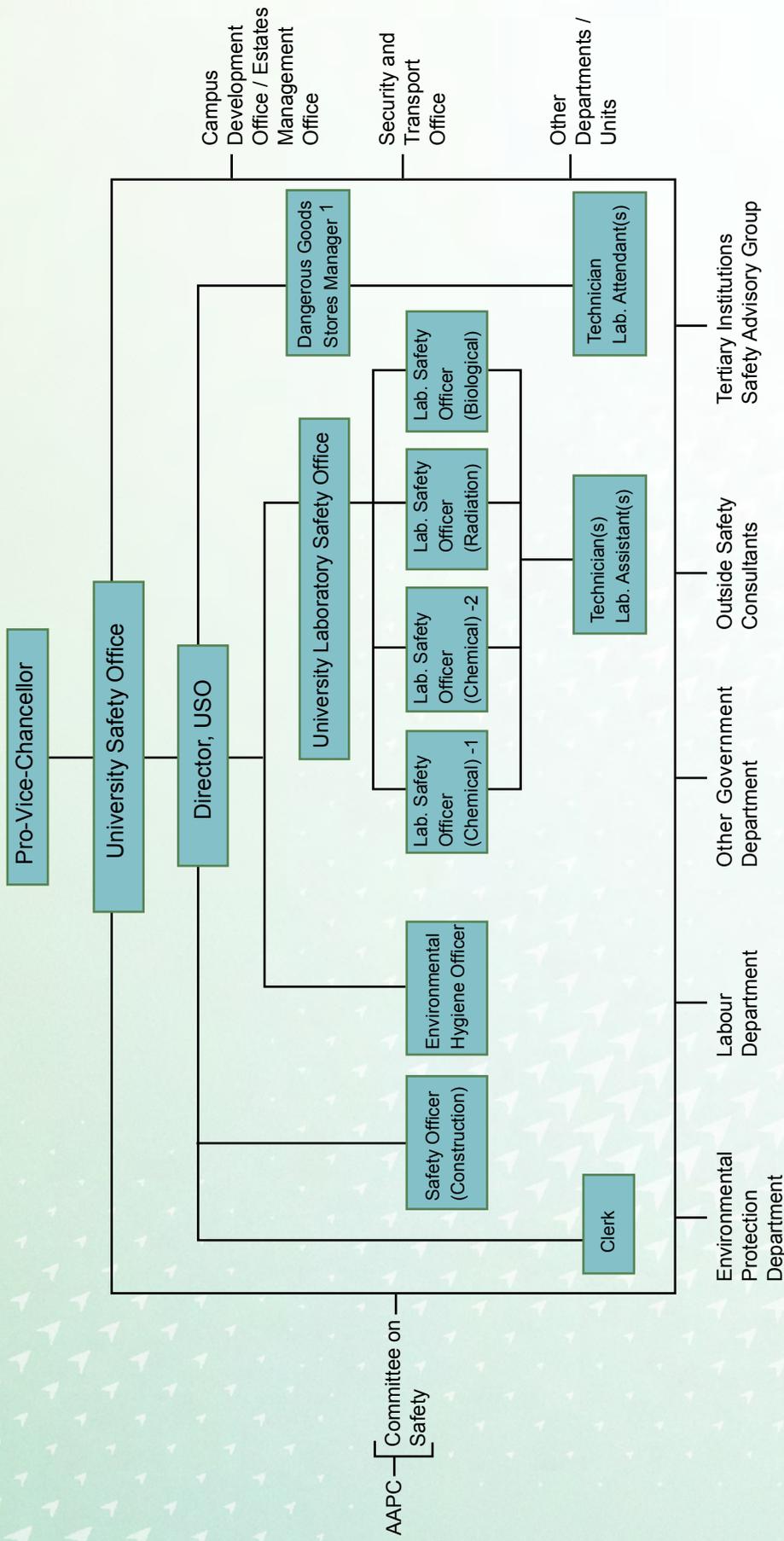
- Be properly trained and suitably qualified;
- Be involved in establishing local arrangements, systems and risk control standards relating to equipment and human performance, by advising Deans/Department Chairmen/Unit Heads on matters such as legal and technical standards;
- Establish and maintain procedures for reporting, investigating, recording and analyzing accidents and incidents;
- Establish and maintain procedures, including monitoring and other means such as review and auditing, to ensure the University management gets a true picture of how well safety and health is being managed (where a benchmarking role may be especially valuable); and
- Present their advice independently and effectively.

Relationships within the University

Safety Coordinators/Safety Committees in Faculties, Schools, Departments and Units should:

- Support the provision of authoritative and independent advice;
- Have a direct reporting line to Deans/Department Chairmen/Unit Heads on matters of policy;
- Have responsibility for implementing and monitoring professional standards and systems;
- Be the contact point between the University Safety Office and the Faculties/Schools/Departments/Units relating to equipment and human performance, by advising Deans/Department Chairmen/Unit Heads on matters such as legal and technical standards.

Structure of the University Safety Office



Note: 1. A concurrent appointment, currently being a Laboratory Technologist in the Department of Chemistry.

January 2012

Duties of the Director, USO

1. To develop and monitor the implementation of an institutional safety policy.
2. To take coordinating measures in safety management in the University to ensure that appropriate legislation is adhered to.
3. To establish standards and procedures in respect of fire prevention, to handle and control dangerous goods and chemicals, and safety in offices and campus grounds, and to conduct safety inspections as and when appropriate.
4. To liaise with specialists both within and outside the University on general or specific work areas relating to safety and health.
5. To represent the University in interacting with regulatory agencies on occupational safety and health matters including the acquisition of permits and licences for the storage, handling, use, release, and disposal of hazardous materials.
6. To promote safety awareness and training by appropriate means.
7. To maintain and analyze accident records pertaining to accidents and incidents.
8. To forbid immediately, where appropriate, the use of a particular substance, plant or process, or to shut down a particular laboratory/office/workplace, subject to reporting the same to a designated Pro-Vice-Chancellor and to the right of appeal by the respective Departments/Units concerned.

Committee on Safety

Composition

Chairman: Appointed by the Vice-Chancellor

Members: Members are appointed by the Chairman of the Committee on Safety

- Chairmen of the Safety Advisory Committees (SAC)
- Director, University Safety Office or his representative
- Director, University Health Services or his representative
- Director of Campus Development or his representative
- Director, Estates Management Office or his representative
- Director, Security and Transport Office
- Secretary of the University or his representative
- Representative nominated by the Postgraduate Student Association of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUPSA)
- Representative nominated by the Student Union of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUSU)

Secretary: Director, USO

(Current membership of the Committee on Safety is published in the Committee's homepage.)

Terms of Reference

To oversee and review Safety Policy of the University on a regular basis, particularly in relation to

1. the implementation of the institutional safety policy;
2. the identification and minimization of the risk of campus events that may produce injury or illness including but not restricted to laboratories, and the promotion of occupational health;
3. the provision of information, instruction and training for staff members and students to increase personal understanding of workplace hazards and safe working practices;
4. the design of new buildings and the alteration and improvements of existing buildings, such that the appropriate safety standards are maintained;
5. recommendations for the health monitoring of staff and students where appropriate, in matters relating to occupational health; and
6. the reporting of safety matters that require University-level attention.

The Committee will report its recommendations to the Administrative and Planning Committee for ratification.

Meeting Schedules and Quorum

1. The Committee shall hold periodic meetings of not less than once every year in physical or virtual formats.
2. The quorum of the Committee shall not be less than 50% of the membership.

Safety Advisory Committee (SAC)

Composition

Safety Advisory Committee (Radiation/Electrical)

Chairman: Appointed by the Chairman of the Committee on Safety

Members: Members of the SAC are appointed by the Chairman of the SAC with the endorsement of the Chairman of the Committee on Safety
 Representatives from the Faculty of Engineering/Faculty of Medicine/Faculty of Science
 Representative from the Campus Development Office
 Director, USO

Secretary: Lab. Safety Officer (Radiation)

Safety Advisory Committee (Chemical/Carcinogens)

Chairman: Appointed by the Chairman of the Committee on Safety

Members: Members of the SAC are appointed by the Chairman of the SAC with the endorsement of the Chairman of the Committee on Safety
 Representatives from the Faculty of Medicine/Faculty of Science
 Dangerous Goods Stores Manager

Secretary: Director, USO

Safety Advisory Committee (Biological)

Chairman: Appointed by the Chairman of the Committee on Safety

Members: Members of the SAC are appointed by the Chairman of the SAC with the endorsement of the Chairman of the Committee on Safety
 Representatives from the Faculty of Medicine/Faculty of Science/Hong Kong Institute of Biotechnology Limited
 Director, Laboratory Animal Services Centre
 Lab. Safety Officer (Biological)

Secretary: Director, USO

Safety Advisory Committee (Environmental Hygiene)

Chairman: Appointed by the Chairman of the Committee on Safety

Members: Members of the SAC are appointed by the Chairman of the SAC with the endorsement of the Chairman of the Committee on Safety
 Representatives from University Health Service/Estates Management Office
 Two representatives to be nominated from Colleges

Secretary: Director, USO

(Current membership of the Safety Advisory Committees are published in the Committee on Safety's homepage.)

Terms of Reference

(A) These terms of reference shall apply to:

- Safety Advisory Committee (Radiation/Electrical)
- Safety Advisory Committee (Chemical/Carcinogens)
- Safety Advisory Committee (Biological)

These SACs are established under the Committee on Safety¹ in order

1. To facilitate good relations between workers and the University Safety Office²;
2. (a) To use the University's scientific expertise to create realistic guidelines acceptable to the majority of its personnel, such guidelines to apply to all Departments/Units in the University;
(b) To assist Safety Co-ordinators in drawing up additional department-specific guidelines to cover particular or unusual hazards;
3. To report on the above matters to the Committee on Safety, and to advise the latter on all matters of safety within its purview;
4. Through its Chairman to participate in periodic Safety Audits of Departments/Units;
5. To assist the Director, USO in matters of laboratory safety within its purview; and
6. To deal with such other matters as may be delegated by the Committee on Safety.

(B) These terms of reference shall apply to:

Safety Advisory Committee (Environmental Hygiene)

This SAC is established under the Committee on Safety¹ in order

1. To advise on matters relating to workplace environment on campus;
2. To advise on general environmental hygiene matters, including sanitary provisions, hostels and transport facilities;
3. To advise on matters relating to environmental hygiene in catering services and food outlets on campus;
4. To advise on environmental hygiene problems generated by visitors and from construction or renovation works;
5. To report on the above matters to the Committee on Safety, and to advise the latter on all matters of environmental hygiene concerns within its purview;
6. To deal with such other matters as may be delegated by the Committee on Safety.

¹ Established in June 1998, the Committee on Safety superseded the former Committee on Laboratory Safety.

² The University Laboratory Safety Office was incorporated into the University Safety Office in December 1996. Afterwards, the University Safety Office was renamed the University Safety & Environment Office in May, 2000. In January 2012, the office was renamed the University Safety Office with the merging of environmental portfolio into another office.

Meeting Schedules and Quorum

1. The Committee shall hold periodic meetings of not less than once every year in physical or virtual formats.
2. The quorum of the Committee shall not be less than 50% of the membership.

Safety Advisory Committee (General)

Composition

Chairman: Appointed by the Chairman of the Committee on Safety

Members: Members of the SAC are appointed by the Chairman of the SAC with the endorsement of the Chairman of the Committee on Safety

Representatives from the following faculties:

Arts, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Medicine, Science, Social Science and Law

A representative from Colleges

A representative from the University Library System

A representative from the Estates Management Office

A representative from the Information Technology Services Centre

A representative from the University Safety Office

A representative from the Personnel Office

Secretary: Appointed by the Chairman of the SAC-General

(Current membership of the Safety Advisory Committees are published in the Committee on Safety's homepage.)

Terms of Reference

The SAC (General) is established under the Committee on Safety in order

1. To facilitate good relations between staff and the University Safety Office, with specific reference to work and working conditions in offices and classrooms, but excluding matters related to laboratories, workshops and building or maintenance work;
2. (a) To use the University's expertise to create realistic health and occupational safety guidelines acceptable to the majority of office personnel, such guidelines to apply to all offices and teaching facilities in the University;
- (b) To help Departments and Units (normally through the Safety Co-ordinators) in drawing up additional department/unit-specific guidelines to cover hazards involved in office work or in teaching;
3. To report on the above matters to the Committee on Safety, and to advise the latter on all matters of safety and health within its purview;
4. To advice on matters relating to periodic Safety Audits of offices and teaching facilities;
5. To provide input to the Director, USO in matters of office safety within its purview;
6. To advise on occupational safety and health matters in relation to employment and the University's obligations as an employer; and
7. To deal with such other matters as may be delegated by the Committee on Safety.

Meeting Schedules and Quorum

1. The Committee shall hold periodic meetings of not less than once every year in physical or virtual formats.
2. The quorum of the Committee shall not be less than 50% of the membership.

Responsible bodies for Resource Allocation and the Annual Schedule

Resource requests that cannot be met by the Department or Unit concerned should be directed to the parties indicated below, in good time to meet the annual cycle of allocations. Initiating Departments or Units should consult the University Safety Office before putting in specific requests.

Item	Responsible Office/ Committee	Annual Deadline	
Capital works	Campus Development Office	September	[1]
Alterations	Estates Management Office	June	[2]
Minor works	Estates Management Office	June	[3]
Academic equipment	Academic Equipment Grant Committee	December	
Safety equipment	University Safety Office	December	
Others	Resource Allocation Committee	December	

[1] To allow time for formal submission to UGC in January.

[2] To allow time for formal submission to UGC on September 1.

[3] For incorporation into the next budget and implementation in the next financial year.

For further enquiries concerning resource requests on academic equipment or on other items, please contact the secretaries of the Academic Equipment Grant Committee or the Resource Allocation Committee.



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