

University Health and Safety Policy

December 2025

POLICY

Approving authority:	University Court
Consultation via:	University Health and Safety Committee
Approval date:	11 December 2025
Effective date:	1 October 2012
Review period:	Annually from date of approval
Responsible Executive:	Secretary of the University
Responsible Office:	SafeGuarding Services - Health & Safety

**HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

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POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy sets out the health, safety and welfare arrangements for all staff working for Heriot-Watt University at all campuses. It also applies to every other person who may be affected by our work activities, acts and services, including students, contractors, visitors and members of the public.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Under this Act, the University has a duty to prepare and revise a written statement of health and safety policy and details of the organisation and arrangements for carrying out the policy.

In this Policy we detail our organisation and arrangements, and in associated procedures and guidance documents we detail the specific operational processes which create a complete health and safety management framework.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Under these Regulations, we must make appropriate arrangements to manage health and safety and make sure that we exercise suitable and sufficient control of these arrangements through effectively planning and organising our activities, managing the process, and by monitoring and auditing our preventative and protective measures.

These Regulations also mean we must appropriately and sufficiently assess the risks staff may face while at work. This includes assessing the risks to others arising from our work activities. We can achieve this by:

- analysing our activities and work areas to establish where we need to assess risks
- developing an inventory of activities and work areas, and creating risk management processes, to facilitate a programme of risk assessments of all entries on the inventory
- making sure we have enough trained and competent people to carry out those risk assessments
- analysing the outcomes of risk assessments and taking appropriate remedial action to address uncontrolled risks, including review of the process within our strategic management objectives

International Health and Safety Legislation

As the University operates internationally, both through its campuses in Dubai and in Malaysia and through arrangements with partners in other jurisdictions, the health and safety management framework shall include consideration of health and safety requirements of such overseas campuses and shall pay due regard to non-UK legislation that might be applicable.

In particular the University shall ensure that its operations in Dubai and Malaysia meet the minimum statutory health and safety requirements of the host country. Where UK requirements are of a higher standard the University will also apply these where practicable.

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

We will implement and continually monitor and evaluate a health and safety management framework which ensures that we assess risk and effectively organise, plan, monitor and review the preventative and protective measures necessary to control risk. All Campuses, Schools and Directorates of the University will apply this Policy and associated health and safety management framework to their activities. These processes enable us to manage health and safety strategically across the University and help us to comply with statutory requirements and demonstrate best practice. This Policy also supports the University's safeguarding and wellbeing processing and initiatives.

We will also make sure we subject the entire system to an auditing process to confirm that our arrangements and the preventative and protective measures remain effective.

Planning

In planning what we do in terms of health and safety, we will:

- identify and assess the risks from hazards associated with all our work activities so that we can eliminate or control foreseeable risks, so far as is reasonably practicable
- allocate sufficient resources to meet the requirements of this Policy
- set realistic short- and long-term objectives, decide priorities and set adequate performance standards

We will also monitor, evaluate and review these standards to make sure we are meeting and maintaining them.

Health and Safety Assistance

As the law requires, we will appoint or secure competent assistance in applying the provisions of health and safety law. This does not detract from the primary responsibility of managers, team leaders and supervisors for ensuring safe conditions of work in their respective areas of responsibility.

Co-operation and Consultation

It is unlikely that our health and safety policy will be effective unless it actively engages all of our employees. We recognise the contribution staff can make towards health and safety in the workplace and will co-operate and consult with staff as necessary.

We will co-operate and consult with properly appointed safety representatives to enable us to fulfil our statutory functions and will facilitate this by providing a University Health and Safety Committee, and related consultation and working groups as required.

The health and safety management framework will only be effective if supporting procedures are created to specify the requirements for complying with this Health and Safety Policy, such procedures will be consulted on with relevant working groups and approved by the University Health and Safety Committee.

4. LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY

This section of our Policy describes how we organise our responsibilities for health and safety at work. It also identifies roles at the University which are allocated specific health and safety responsibilities and outlines related duties.

To ensure that we comply with our Health and Safety Policy and any other legal obligations, we have organised these arrangements to reflect and operate within our line management structures.

Principal and Vice Chancellor

The Principal, on behalf of Court, will carry the prime responsibility for health and safety throughout the University. This includes ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of:

- Staff, whilst at work.
- Students, while attending their courses of study/related activities and when on University sites.
- Contractors, when working on University sites.
- Visitors to University sites.

The **Principal** will also:

- Visibly demonstrate commitment to achieving a high standard of health and safety performance within the University and to developing a positive attitude to health and safety amongst staff.
- Direct the University Executive to ensure there are adequate resources to implement this Health and Safety Policy.

- Devolve specific health and safety duties to managers across the University as necessary.

The Secretary of the University (University Health and Safety Director)

The Secretary of the University fulfils the role of University Health and Safety Director and is accountable to the Principal for directing the development, implementation, review and audit of the health and safety management framework throughout the University.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the health and safety management framework is applied corporately and consistently across the University.
- Updating and advising the Principal and Court on health and safety performance, compliance and best practice.
- Directing commitment to achieving a high standard of health and safety performance within the University and developing a positive attitude to health and safety amongst staff and students.
- With support from the Head of Health & Safety, SafeGuarding Services, advising managers on health and safety issues, including breaches of health and safety policy and procedures which could result in disciplinary action for both staff and students.
- Instructing relevant reviews of health and safety processes to make sure they remain effective and in line with legislation and best practice where appropriate.

Head of Health and Safety

The Head of Health and Safety is accountable to the University Health and Safety Director for providing a professional health and safety advisory service to the University. These responsibilities include:

- Managing the development, implementation and review of the Health and Safety Policy and procedures.
- Directing and monitoring the application of the University's electronic safety and security management system and e-learning programmes.
- Directing training solutions required to support the implementation and on-going management of our health and safety management framework.
- Investigating and recording incidents, analysing and producing reports on incident statistics, and liaising with appropriate managers and properly appointed safety representatives.
- Advising on a programme of risk assessment to analyse and evaluate the risks arising from work activities.
- Supporting development of safe systems of work in respect of the various activities carried out by the University.
- Advising managers on monitoring and auditing programmes to support them in their roles
- Advising the University Executive and the University Health and Safety Committee on all aspects of our Health and Safety Policy and associated framework.
- Liaising with internal and external agencies (for example, the Health and Safety Executive, fire authorities, unions, insurers and other enforcing authorities) on health and safety matters on behalf of the University.
- Preparing an annual report of the University's health and safety performance for submission to the Court, through the University Health and Safety Committee.
- Updating and distributing amendments to the health and safety management framework.
- Reporting to the University Health and Safety Director on all matters relating to health and safety at the University.

The **Head of Health & Safety** has delegated authority from the Principal to:

- Examine and investigate any areas of the University to establish the status of health and safety issues.
- Take control of any events or activities which present serious health and safety risks to the University population or assets.
- Instruct the closure of areas or cessation of activities which are identified as presenting serious health and safety risks to the University population or assets.

Head of SafeGuarding Services

The Head of SafeGuarding Services is accountable to the University Health and Safety Director for providing a professional security and first response advisory service to the University. These responsibilities include:

- Managing the SafeGuarding Services Teams.
- Management and maintenance of incident response.
- Managing the development, implementation and review of the SafeGuarding Services Policy and procedures.
- Directing and monitoring the application of the University's electronic safety and security management system and e-learning programmes.
- Directing training solutions required to support the implementation and on-going management of our SafeGuarding management framework.
- Investigating and recording incidents, analysing and producing reports on incident statistics, and liaising with appropriate managers and properly appointed representatives.
- Advising the University Executive and the University Health and Safety Committee on all aspects of our SafeGuarding Services Policy and associated framework.
- Liaising with internal and external agencies (unions, insurers, emergency services and other enforcing authorities) on SafeGuarding matters on behalf of the University.
- Preparing an annual report of the University's SafeGuarding Services performance for submission to the Court, through the University Health and Safety Committee.
- Updating and distributing amendments to the SafeGuarding Services management framework.
- Reporting to the University Health and Safety Director on all matters relating to SafeGuarding Services at the University.

Vice Principals and Deputy Principals

Vice Principals and Deputy Principals are each accountable to the Principal for promoting a positive awareness of the strategic importance of health and safety throughout their area of responsibility. Their specific responsibilities include:

- Leading and managing their area of responsibility in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy.
- As a member of the University Executive, contributing to the development of health and safety strategy and policy.
- Integrating health and safety issues into the strategic planning process, within their area of responsibility.
- Notifying the University Health and Safety Director of any breach of health and safety legislation, our policy and procedures, or other circumstances which expose staff, students or others to risk or harm to their health.
- Championing and promoting corporate health and safety initiatives or campaigns.

Provost and Vice Principal Heriot-Watt University Malaysia

The Provost and Vice Principal will carry the legal accountability, under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 (Laws of Malaysia Act 514), for safety and health throughout the elements of Heriot-Watt University Malaysia under the direct control of Heriot-Watt University. Specifically, this means that the Provost and Vice Principal has legal accountability for all areas, activities, equipment and facilities under the direct control of the University. This includes ensuring, so far as is practicable, the health and safety of:

- University staff, whilst at work.
- Students, while attending their courses of study/related activities within the areas of the Campus under the direct control of the University.
- Contractors, when working on equipment under the direct control of the University.
- Visitors to the elements of the Campus under the direct control of the University.

The **Provost and Vice Principal** will also:

- visibly demonstrate commitment to achieving a high standard of health and safety performance within the academic environment and to developing a positive attitude to health and safety amongst staff
- ensure there are adequate resources to implement the University's responsibilities under the health and safety framework procedure
- devolve specific health and safety duties to relevant managers across the Campus as necessary
- ensure that the health and safety framework procedure is applied corporately and consistently across the University's activities at Malaysia Campus
- notify the Head of Health & Safety of any breach of health and safety legislation, our Policy and procedures, or other circumstances which expose staff, students or others to risk or harm to their health

Provost and Vice Principal Dubai Campus

The Provost and Vice Principal will carry the legal accountability, under UAE Labour Law (Federal Law No8 1980) and The Occupational Safety Regulations 2010 – Regulation No. IO – 001 (Dubai Emirate) for health and safety throughout the elements of Dubai Campus under the direct control of the University. Specifically, this means that the Provost and Vice Principal has legal accountability for all areas, activities, equipment and facilities under the direct control of the University. This includes ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of:

- University staff, whilst at work
- students, while attending their courses of study/related activities within the areas of the Campus under the direct control of the University
- contractors, when working on equipment under the direct control of the University
- visitors to the elements of the Campus under the direct control of the University

The **Provost and Vice Principal** will also:

- visibly demonstrate commitment to achieving a high standard of health and safety performance within the academic environment and to developing a positive attitude to health and safety amongst staff
- ensure there are adequate resources to implement the University's responsibilities under the health and safety framework procedure
- devolve specific health and safety duties to relevant managers across the Campus as necessary
- ensure that the health and safety framework procedure is applied corporately and consistently across the University's activities at Dubai Campus
- notify the Head of Health & Safety of any breach of health and safety legislation, our policy and procedures, or other circumstances which expose staff, students or others to risk or harm to their health

Executive Deans or Global Directors of Schools and Directorates

Executive Deans or Directors of Schools and Directorates are accountable to the Principal or Secretary of the University respectively for leading and managing their School or Directorate in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy. Their responsibilities include:

- positively and proactively promoting the effective implementation of our health and safety policy and procedures, and facilitating open communication on all health and safety issues throughout their School or Directorate
- contributing to the development of health and safety strategy and policy
- integrating health and safety issues into operational planning and monitoring the performance of their School or Directorate in relation to health and safety management
- notifying the Head of Health & Safety of any breach of health and safety legislation, our Policy and procedures, or other circumstances which expose staff, students or others to risk or harm to their health

- through appropriate supervision and training, providing a reasonably practicable level of safety for all staff, students and others under their control
- developing and implementing subject-specific, safe-working practices and procedures where required
- facilitating regular safety inspections of work operations and areas under their control
- assisting their Heads of Subject and Service Managers to discharge their health and safety responsibilities
- appointing appropriate staff within their School or Directorate to fulfil the role of School or Directorate Safety Officer
- acting as the point of escalation in times of absence for the responsibilities discharged to senior role holders within their School or Service.

Academic and Professional Services Staff with Management Responsibility

Academic Staff with Management Responsibility are accountable to their Executive Dean of School or Global Director for taking action to address immediate health and safety risks and reporting these risks and any action taken subsequently. Their responsibilities include:

- ensuring that activities taking place in their area of responsibility are subjected to the University's risk assessment processes
- taking appropriate action to protect staff and students against identified hazards
- making sure that all health and safety incidents occurring in their work area are properly reported via the University's reporting processes
- ensuring that all staff under their control complete the health and safety e-learning programme and all appropriate health and safety training and appropriate records are retained
- to cascade this policy to their direct reports.

Academic Staff Supervising Research, Teaching or other Projects

Academic Staff Supervising Research, Teaching or other Projects are accountable to their Executive Dean of School for:

- ensuring that all projects and teaching activities taking place in their area of responsibility are subjected to the University's risk assessment processes
- appropriately supervising all projects to verify that health and safety processes are applied
- taking appropriate action to protect staff and students against identified hazards
- making sure that all health and safety incidents occurring in their work area are properly reported via the University's reporting processes
- ensuring that all students under their supervision are aware of the procedures they should follow in an emergency (for example, fire, first aid, incident reporting and chemical spillages)
- ensuring all students under their supervision complete all appropriate health and safety training and appropriate records are retained

Heads of Division and Heads of Operations (including equivalent titles)

Heads of Division and Heads of Operations are accountable respectively to the relevant Heads of Directorate / Executive Deans for taking action to address immediate health and safety risks and reporting these risks and any action taken subsequently. Their responsibilities include:

- ensuring that activities taking place in their area of responsibility are subjected to the University's risk assessment processes
- taking appropriate action to protect people against identified hazards
- making sure that all health and safety incidents occurring in their work area are properly reported via the University's reporting processes
- ensuring that all staff under their control complete the health and safety e-learning programme and complete all appropriate health and safety training and appropriate records are retained

School or Directorate Safety Officers

These Safety Officers are accountable to their Executive Dean of School or Directorate for co-ordinating health and safety activities within their respective areas to ensure compliance with the University Health and Safety Policy and associated framework.

Their responsibilities include:

- contributing to the development of School or Directorate health and safety risk management plans, including course or module planning
- co-ordinating all risk assessment programmes throughout the School or Directorate, making sure they are entered into Shield (the University's Safety and Security Management System)
- making sure that all risk assessments meet the criteria set out in our health and safety management framework, and making all staff, students and others aware of any hazard or risk identified within the School or Directorate
- in conjunction with Technical Services Management, ensuring that any external contractors working on School or Directorate equipment or premises are authorised and controlled as specified within our contractor management procedures
- making sure that records are kept of any personal protective equipment issued to staff, students and others within their School or Directorate
- helping to co-ordinate regular safety inspections of work operations throughout their School or Directorate
- notifying the Executive Dean of School or Directorate and the Head of Health & Safety of any breach of health and safety legislation, our Policy and procedures, or other circumstances which expose staff, students or others to risk or harm to their health
- making sure that all health and safety incidents occurring in their School or Directorate are properly reported in accordance with the incident reporting procedure
- co-ordinating appropriate arrangements to ensure that all staff, students and others within the relevant areas are aware of the procedures they should follow in an emergency (for example, fire, first aid, incident reporting, and chemical spillages), paying particular attention to anyone with special needs
- liaising with Health & Safety to access professional advice and support regarding changes in legislation, training needs, safe systems of work, and visits from enforcing authorities etc.

Technical Services Managers (including equivalent titles)

These officers are accountable to their Executive Dean of School or Directorate for co-ordinating health and safety activities within their respective areas of responsibility to ensure compliance with the University Health and Safety Policy and associated management framework.

Their responsibilities include:

- in conjunction with the relevant School or Directorate Safety Officer; ensuring that any external contractors working on School or Directorate equipment or premises are authorised and controlled as specified within our contractor management procedures
- supporting regular safety inspections of work operations throughout their School or Directorate
- notifying the School or Directorate Safety Officer and Health & Safety of any breach of health and safety legislation, our policy and procedures, or other circumstances which expose staff, students or others to risk or harm to their health
- liaising with Health & Safety to access professional advice and support regarding changes in legislation, training needs, safe systems of work, and visits from enforcing authorities etc.

Head of Hospitality Services

In addition to their duties as a Head of Division, the Head of Hospitality Services is accountable for the following responsibilities:

- co-ordinating appropriate arrangements to ensure that all staff, visitors and delegates attending conferences and other events involved are notified of the procedures they should follow in an emergency (for example, fire, first aid, incident reporting, and chemical spillages), paying particular attention to anyone with special needs
- co-ordinating appropriate arrangements to ensure that all staff, visitors and others attending or participating in summer camps are notified of the procedures they should follow in an

emergency (for example, fire, first aid, incident reporting, and chemical spillages), paying particular attention to anyone with special needs

- making sure that all health and safety incidents related to conferences, events or summer camps are properly reported in accordance with the incident reporting procedure

Head of Facilities Management

In addition to their duties as a Head of Division, the Head of Facilities Management is accountable for the following responsibilities:

- maintaining fire alarm systems in line with statutory requirements
- maintaining emergency lighting systems in line with relevant standards
- maintaining firefighting appliances in line with statutory requirements
- implementing and overseeing electrical safety arrangements in accordance with legal requirements and relevant standards
- approving, controlling and monitoring all works that affect the fabric and services of the Estate
- ensuring that all statutory testing and inspection requirements relative to the fabric and services of the Estate are met

University Health and Safety Committee

The University Health and Safety Committee, consists of management representatives and properly approved representatives from recognised Trades Unions and others from relevant areas of the University. Reporting to the University Court, the University Health and Safety Committee will:

- consult on the Health and Safety Policy and related procedures, providing advice and input on the application of the health and safety management framework throughout the University
- monitor and evaluate this Policy and associated procedures within our health and safety management framework. Where appropriate, the Policy will be reviewed and/or further guidance issued relating to particular work activities or if health and safety legislation changes
- receive and monitor incident statistics, generated by Health & Safety, to review trends and contribute to the development of plans and initiatives to address incident trends or particular areas of concern
- monitor implementation of the health and safety management framework throughout the University, and provide an annual monitoring report to the University Court, detailing the Committee's assessment of the management of health and safety across the University
- champion health and safety causes and initiatives

All members of staff

Although some members of staff may have specific responsibilities as outlined in the preceding paragraphs all members of staff must:

- in the course of their work, act with due care for the health and safety of themselves, other members of staff, those in the University's care (for example, students, visitors and contractors), and members of the general public
- familiarise themselves with and observe all instructions on health and safety at the University
- comply with any safety advice, instruction and training given on how to use equipment, machinery, dangerous substances and personal protective equipment
- familiarise themselves with the procedures to apply in emergencies (for example, fire and first aid)
- report all incidents and near misses as specified within the incident reporting procedure
- if they discover a hazard, they should take temporary action, if safe to do so, wherever possible to make the hazard safe (for example, by taking equipment out of use, clearing a dangerous area, or putting up warning notices), and report the hazard as specified within the hazard reporting procedure
- co-operate with the University on all health and safety matters at work
- participate in and complete the University's health and safety e-learning programme and all appropriate health and safety training.

Any member of staff who authorises work or the purchase of equipment must consider any health and safety implications. Staff with responsibilities for specific aspects of health and safety must satisfy themselves that those responsibilities as appropriate are re-assigned in their absence.

A **member of staff** may face disciplinary action if they:

- fail to exercise reasonable care for their own safety, or that of others
- do not co-operate with University on health and safety matters
- misuse or tamper with any equipment or facilities provided for health and safety

Students

It is a requirement that all students must comply with the requirements of the University's health and safety management framework. In particular students must:

- act with due care for the health and safety of themselves and others
- not misuse or tamper with any equipment or facilities provided for health and safety
- familiarise themselves with and comply with all health and safety instructions at the University
- comply with any safety advice or instruction and training given on how to use work equipment, hazardous substances and personal protective equipment
- apply the procedures in respect of emergencies (for example, fire and first aid)
- report all incidents and near misses to their tutor, supervisor or any member of staff
- if they discover a hazard, notify a member of staff
- co-operate with the University on all matters related to health and safety
- complete all appropriate health and safety training

Students may face disciplinary action if they:

- fail to exercise reasonable care for their own safety, or that of others
- do not co-operate with University on health and safety matters
- misuse or tamper with any equipment or facilities provided for health and safety

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The University Health and Safety Committee will monitor and evaluate this Policy and associated procedures within our health and safety management. Where appropriate, we will review the Policy and/or issue further guidance relating to particular work activities or if health and safety legislation changes.

6. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FURTHER REFERENCE

Our health and safety framework and all supplemental procedures and guidance documents are published on the Health & Safety [Sharepoint](#) site.

7. FURTHER SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Further support and advice on all health and safety related matters can be obtained by contacting Health & Safety

By telephone: +44 (0)131 451 3900

By email: healthandsafety@hw.ac.uk

8. POLICY VERSION AND HISTORY

Version No	Date of Approval	Approving Authority	Brief Description of Amendment
V. 1	01.10.2012	University Court	1 st version of document in this format/ content – replaces: HSMP 01a HSMP 01b HSMP 02 HSMP 03 HSMP 04 HSMP 05 HSMP 12 HSMP 13 HSMP 15 HSMP 17
V2	Reviewed Sept 2013	UHSC	Reviewed – no amendments
V3	Reviewed Sept 2014	UHSC	Reviewed – incorporates International Campuses
V4	Reviewed December 2015	UHSC	Review, replace Safeguard with Shield ^{HSMS}
V5	Reviewed June 2018	UHSC	Review, update terminology and clarify responsibilities at International Campuses
V6	Reviewed Aug 2020	UHSC	Review update terminology
V7	Reviewed Aug 2021	UHSC	Reviewed – no amendments
V8	Reviewed Dec 2022	UHSC	Reviewed update terminology
V9	Reviewed May 2023	UHSC	Reviewed – added additional duty on page 10 'All members of staff with Line Management Responsibility'.
V10	Reviewed June 2024	UHSC	Reviewed – no amendments
V11	Review July 2025	UHSC	Reviewed and amendments made to page 5 & 6 for the responsibilities to Head of Health and Safety and Head of SafeGuarding Services