

Occupational Health

OHS Policy Document: OHS 1/07

Introduction

Occupational Health is concerned with the effects of work on health and the effects of health on work. Effective preventative occupational health strategies are particularly important given the diverse range of hazards and working environments associated with activities undertaken by University staff and students.

Occupational Health is also necessary to assist individuals with injuries or medical conditions to remain at work or return to work, and for people with disabilities to obtain and retain work.

Occupational health service provision does not cover general medical care. All University staff and students should register with a general practitioner, who can also refer to NHS hospitals and other specialist services.

Purpose

This document provides University policy and arrangements to manage occupational health issues arising from University activities or premises.

Principles

The University is committed to minimising the potential for work related ill health (physical or mental) or injury as far as is reasonably practicable.

The University aims to ensure early identification and management of occupational ill health.

The University will have a strategic approach to occupational health via the Health and Safety Management Committee (as a committee of Council), the Consultative Committee for Health and Safety, the Health Protection Advisory Group (and other advisory groups of the Health and Safety Management Committee), and other committees and working parties where appropriate.

The University aims to provide managers and staff with information about the nature and causes of effects of ill health in and arising from the workplace. This is achieved in a variety of ways including the provision of policies, guidelines, education, web-based information, training, and support.

The University will provide those individuals whose health is identified to be particularly at risk from work with appropriate management and advice, whilst recognising confidentiality where appropriate.

The University will monitor occupational ill health and the effectiveness of measures to reduce it.

The University has established an Occupational Health Service (OHS), which provides specialist occupational health advice and services to the University, its staff and managers. This support is extended to students in situations where they are carrying out activities that could cause a risk to their health as part of their course or research.

OHS will ensure that medical information relating to individuals is treated in strict confidence in line with professional ethics and data protection requirements.

All services within central administration (e.g. the Safety Office, Personnel Services, and Disability Services) will work closely in areas where occupational health matters overlap with other functions or strategies.

Responsibilities

Heads of departments should ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that the health of their staff and students is not adversely affected by their work.

In particular, they should:

Ensure that work activities and places are designed and reviewed so that they do not lead to ill health;
Ensure that individuals are advised of the risks to health and are provided with appropriate equipment and training to avoid the risks;

Promptly address any occupational ill health if it arises; and

Ensure that there are appropriate plans for individuals at significant risk of work related ill health, or whose health may impair capacity for work.

Staff also have responsibilities for their own health and for taking advantage of the occupational health

support provided by the University where necessary. Students should contact the OHS if they are concerned their health is at risk from activities undertaken as part of their course or research.

The Director of OHS ensures the provision of professional occupational health services to the University. These services, broadly, cover:

Advising on the control of potential health risks at work;
Detecting occupational disease at an early stage; and
Advising on ill-health (work-related or unrelated to work) in the workplace.

Arrangements

The University provides a specialist Occupational Health Service (OHS), staffed by an appropriate number and level of Occupational Health professionals and support staff, commensurate with the complexity and demands of University activities.

OHS covers the work carried out by staff, postgraduate students and academic visitors. Also by negotiation (where it complements or does not interfere with core activities) it provides services to certain student groups, University-associated units, and external organisations.

OHS supports the University in complying with health and safety law and employment law and forms part of the University risk management process. In providing these services, OHS will visit and have access to workplaces as required.

OHS will support the University in developing occupational health strategy and policy guidelines, advising committees and working parties, providing information and training, and assisting with data gathering for the reporting of occupational health cases or issues.

OHS service programmes will include advice on fitness for work (including pre-employment health assessments), advice on relevant hazards and risk assessment, health surveillance services, travel health advice, advice on the management of incidents and outbreaks, and a referral service to raise work-attributable health concerns and conditions.

Medical information required by OHS from treating practitioners will be sought under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988. Occupational Health records of a medical nature pertaining to an individual are held in OHS and are not available to other members of the University. (Health records of health surveillance undertaken by OHS under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 are not medical records). Information on the results of health surveillance of individuals will be provided to respective departments, as required under HSE guidance. All OHS records will be kept, as necessary, under data protection and other legislation.

Health Surveillance services (such as under COSHH) are provided to departments by the OHS, following appropriate risk assessment and registration of staff by departments. The responsibility for ensuring attendance and for follow-up of departmental issues arising from health surveillance lies with departments and the individual.

OHS will initiate the statutory reporting of occupational diseases to the Health and Safety Executive where required under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), and make any necessary statutory reports of communicable disease to the relevant public health authorities.

All OHS staff work to a strict code of ethics concerning the confidentiality of consultations and medical records. All staff, both clinical and non-clinical, cannot and will not disclose medical information of employees in their charge to any party without the prior consent of those employees. OHS will provide advice to University departments without breaching medical confidentiality. This advice should be treated by the recipients as sensitive personal data in respect of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the [University Policy on Data Protection](#).

OHS will share information and coordinate with a range of other parties. Activities will include:

Regular liaison with relevant central services to review policies, procedures and the effective co-ordination of health and safety, personnel, and disability matters within the University;

Liaison with other University departments as required;

Regular provision of anonymised group statistical data and reports for the maintenance and improvement of the occupational health of University staff and students;

Regular liaison with occupational health services in other universities, other sectors, and relevant professional and scientific bodies for the benefit of the University;

Liaison, as required, with the Health and Safety Executive and other government agencies; and

Liaison with NHS agencies, including the public health authorities, as required.

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19th April 2016	No changes made		

THIS STATEMENT FORMS PART OF THE UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE POLICY.