



Health & Safety Policy

Effective date of the Policy:	February 2020
Review of the Policy:	February 2023
Review Due on the Policy:	February 2024
Responsible SMT Member:	CEO
Policy Authorised By:	Board of Trustees
Signed:	Grace Boyle, Chair of Board of Trustees
Date	1 st June 2023

1. Introduction

UUSU regards the promotion of health and safety measures as a mutual objective for both management and employees and we will actively support all reasonable practical measures to promote a genuine 'safety culture' at work. UUSU will take all reasonable steps to protect employees, contractors and visitors from foreseeable work hazards which could result in personal injury, ill health or damage to property.

This is a statutory led document in that it meets the Union's obligation to prepare a Safety Policy under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. However, the purpose of the policy extends beyond legal compliance; it is intended as a foundation for the pursuit of effective management of Health and Safety in all of UUSU's activities.

2. UUSU's Duties

UUSU will:

- Provide and maintain a safe and healthy working environment, including liaison where applicable with a building's owner/landlords and other inhabitants as appropriate
- Provide appropriate training, instruction and supervision for all employees when they start work with us. If their work or responsibilities change a review will be carried out by the line manager to ensure that these changes do not introduce a new or greater risk. A periodic review will be carried out to ensure safe working practices
- Provide appropriate equipment (as it may be required)
- Provide safe systems of work, ensuring that they are used by all employees
- Ensure in so far as is reasonably practical, that articles and substances purchased for use at our offices are safe and without health risks and that they are stored and handled safely
- Maintain constant and continuing attention to all aspects of safety. SMT and/or your line manager will make regular safety inspections in order that we maintain a safe and healthy working environment
- Consult with employees on significant matters of health and safety through joint events and activities and as is appropriate.

Overall responsibility for health and safety lies with the Trustee Board and is delivered through the CEO and Directors, who will ensure compliance with health and safety policy and the promotion of the ongoing development and improvement of health and safety practice.

3. UUSU Employee Duties

As an employee you too have a legal and moral responsibility to act in a safe manner and to co-operate with UUSU's health and safety policy and procedures. Specifically, you must:

- Work safely and efficiently, take reasonable care of yourself and colleagues affected by your actions
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear at work
- Keep your work area clean and tidy
- Comply with safe operating procedures and any verbal instructions issued by a manager
- Report any accident or a near miss at work, however minor and assist in the investigation of accidents and near misses
- Report any damaged fixtures, fittings, equipment and furniture immediately to your manager
- Never be reluctant to ask for help or assistance in understanding or complying with a safe operating practice or work safety rule

4. Display Screen Equipment

Legislation covering the use of display screen equipment was introduced through namely the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992. The aim of the Regulations is to ensure that employers and employees take appropriate action to control risks associated with the use of such equipment, the most familiar of which is the personal computer.

To support understanding on this a copy of 'Working with VDUs' the guidance leaflet produced by the Health and Safety Executive explains in more detail and can be accessed via: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf

Employees who use Display Screen Equipment (DSE) for a significant part of their normal work are entitled to have a free eye test at an optician of their choice. Where there is a cost to an eye test UUSU will pay for this once per annum, up to a maximum of £30. This should be claimed as part of the normal expenses process. If the optician certifies that corrective lenses are required for DSE work, UUSU will contribute up to a current maximum of £100 every two years towards the cost of frames and lenses. The optician must certify that corrective lenses are required for DSE, with the receipt attached to a completed expense claim form. Please contact the Director of HR and Campus Operations if you are unsure of your entitlement on this matter.

5. First Aid

UUSU offices are generally risk assessed as a low hazard environment and **we work with the University to ensure first aid equipment is available from the main reception**. In the event of a serious accident or emergency do not delay in summoning help. The emergency telephone number is 22222.

You should familiarise yourself with the arrangements of your workplace, by knowing who to contact in the event of an accident. There is a fully equipped first aid box at each of UUSU's sites. Please note however that by law any individual **who may be** appointed as responsible for first aid is not allowed to give you any medication, including tablets for pain relief. First-aiders **who are employed by UUSU** are automatically and specifically covered under the Students' Union's Employers Liability Insurance should a claim be made against them as a result of them carrying out their responsibilities as a first aider.

6. Reporting Accidents & Near Misses

An accident is an unplanned, unwanted incident which leads to an injury, however minor e.g. cut, burn or abrasion. UUSU has a legal duty to keep a record of all accidents and more serious injuries have to be reported to the relevant authority.

A near miss is an unplanned incident which could have caused an injury and/or damage to premises, property or equipment. UUSU also wants to know about these near misses or 'narrow escapes' as it will help us to take preventative steps to safeguard against it happening again – when it could result in injury to you, to a colleague or a visitor. Examples of a near miss include: nearly tripping in a stairwell or over trailing cables and near collision with furniture/equipment.

If you have an accident or near miss at work, you must report it immediately **via the online form** regardless of how minor it may seem to be. In the event of injury, you should also involve **a campus First Aider** if there is one present at your place of work. The accident or near miss must be reported via the online Accident/Near Miss Record Form which is on **our website at <https://www.uusu.org/about/online-accident-form/>**. This form then goes to SMT who will advise the Trustees on any necessary action.

If you are likely to be off work for seven consecutive calendar days (including any days when you would not normally work) as a result of an injury sustained in a workplace accident, please notify your manager immediately. Don't wait until you return to work.

7. Reporting Potential Hazards

A hazard is something which has the potential to cause harm. Examples include:

- Holes and tears in carpets or broken/missing floor tiles
- Faulty equipment
- Electrical or telephone cables trailing across the floor
- Broken or inadequate overhead lighting
- Blocked fire exit
- Damaged furniture and/or unstable shelving
- Overflowing refuse bins
- Dirty toilets and rest areas

If you spot a potential hazard, even one which appears to be minor, you are required to report it immediately to your manager. This allows us to take effective remedial action to ensure that no-one is injured and/or that there is no damage to property.

8. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

The checks and inspections noted in section seven should reveal most potentially dangerous faults. However, some faults of an electrical nature can only be reliably detected by a combined visual inspection and **industry** test. This should be carried out in accordance with the schedule to back up the checks and inspections and is likely to be justified:

- Whenever there is reason to suppose the equipment may be defective and this cannot be confirmed by visual examination
- After any repair, medication or similar work
- At periods appropriate to the equipment, the manner and frequency of use and the environment (see below)

Equipment/Environment	User Check	Formal Visual Inspection	Combined Inspection and Testing
Desk Computers	No	Yes 2-4 Years	No if double insulated, otherwise up to 5 Years.
Photocopiers and rarely moved printers and scanners			
Double insulated (Class II) equipment: Not hand held; moved occasionally, e.g. fans and table lamps, microwaves.	No	Yes 2-4 Years	No
Earthed equipment (Class 1) Electric kettles, kitchen equipment that cuts or heats	Yes	Yes 6 Months – 1 Year	Yes 1-2 Years
Cables, (leads and plugs connected to the above) and mains voltage extension leads and battery charging equipment for laptops, iPads, mobile phones.	Yes	Yes 6 Months – 4 Years depending on the type of equipment it is connected to	Yes 1-5 Years depending on the type of equipment it is connected to.

Equipment subject to a combined inspection and test (PAT) should be labelled to indicate that it has been tested satisfactorily, i.e. has been passed as safe, and when it was tested. Such labels should not have a next test due date on it. If inspection and testing show the appliance is faulty, it is unsafe **and** unless remedial action is immediate, and the equipment then passes the re-inspection and test, the equipment must be immediately taken out of service.

9. Fire Precautions & Emergency Evacuation

You should acquaint yourself with the procedure to follow in the event of a fire. The fire procedure to be followed for your work area will be displayed in a prominent position, normally adjacent to the fire alarm and/or firefighting equipment, for example the fire extinguisher. Fire drills will be carried out periodically by the University. For your own safety and that of colleagues, students and visitors please follow these simple guidelines regarding fire and fire prevention:

1. UUSU Premises are no smoking sites which includes all areas within the property as well as all areas/grounds surrounding the office.
2. Make a daily external visual check on any electrical equipment you are using, looking for obvious damage to the cable, wiring or plug. Do not use equipment if it appears to be defective and report the potential damage to your manager straight away. You should not attempt to change a plug or to gain access to the live internal workings of any equipment, unless you are properly trained and authorised to do so by your manager. Switch off electrical appliances at the end of your working day
3. Make sure that there is no build-up of rubbish especially items which can catch alight easily. Good housekeeping is fundamental to fire prevention

4. Make sure that fire exits and access to firefighting equipment are not obstructed, for example by boxes, stationery or by furniture. Keep internal fire doors closed at all times
5. Never move fire extinguishers from their assigned places
6. Make sure that you know where your evacuation assembly point is
7. If you discover a fire, immediately find the nearest alarm call point and break the glass to activate the alarm. If you can't find the alarm call point or if it fails to sound, raise the alarm verbally
8. Treat any alarm (other than known tests) as a genuine emergency. Phone the emergency services. Say who you are and precisely where the fire is located
9. Stay calm and do not take any risks for your own or others' safety; if in doubt leave the building immediately. Do not stop to collect personal belongings or to wait for visitors or your colleagues (unless they are in difficulty)
10. Wherever possible do switch off electrical equipment and close windows and doors behind you. If you suspect someone is still in the building inform the manager carrying out the roll call and/or the Fire Brigade Officer immediately
11. Once outside go immediately to the evacuation assembly point and await roll call and further instructions. Do not re-enter the building until told to do so by a senior manager or the Fire Brigade – even if the alarm has been silenced
12. If you believe the fire to be controllable and it is safe to do so and if you have been trained in its proper use, use the firefighting equipment provided. Read the instructions first and ensure that you are using the correct fire extinguisher for the type of fire you are fighting. Using the wrong extinguisher could be dangerous and may make the situation worse. If in doubt get out of the building and stay out

10. Safe Use of Equipment

For your own safety and that of others you may only operate machinery and equipment once you have been trained and in your manager's opinion you are competent to do so. Furthermore, you are required to comply at all times with the safe operating procedure for each piece of machinery and equipment.

We also need you to play your part in ensuring that any safety equipment provided is maintained in good order. Please therefore report any faults or damage immediately to your manager.

The wilful damage, misuse, removal or interference with equipment, including any item provided for safety purposes (for example first aid kit and firefighting equipment) will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and will result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

11. Manual Handling

Manual handling is one of the major causes of industrial accidents, some of which lead to permanent disability. For convenience and speed, many people will be tempted to lift a load manually which is too heavy or too awkwardly placed to be moved without causing damage, particularly to the back. Manual handling covers lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving loads. Safe and approved procedures must be used when lifting or carrying heavy or awkward items.

Where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid such handling jobs then a full assessment must be carried out by the Line Manager/Supervisor. The results of the assessment should make it clear whether risks to employees exist. **Documents** produced by the Health and Safety Executive explains these regulations in more detail and can be accessed via the link below.

www.hseni.gov.uk/articles/manual-handling.

12. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations came into force on 1 January 1993. They provide a framework for the provision of personal protective equipment in circumstances where assessment has shown a continuing need for personal protection. **Potential** examples of PPE in UUSU are protective clothing such as aprons, gloves, goggles and safety footwear. Employees are legally required to use any Personal Protective Equipment provided.

13. Hygiene & Health Conditions

Paying meticulous attention to good habits in relation to hygiene will greatly help to reduce the spread of diseases and viruses in the workplace. The most important of these good habits is the thorough washing and drying of hands after toilet use and the co-operation of all employees in this regard is requested.

If handling food or drink (including tea/coffee making operations) or handling crockery or utensils that are ready for use by others (kettles and cups for example) ensure you wash your hands before such handling.

UUSU will ensure that **the University provide** workplaces **that** are adequately lit, well ventilated and adequately heated. Any concerns in this regard must be brought to the attention of their line manager.

14. COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)

Product safety data sheets explain the procedure and precautions to be adopted when using potentially hazardous products. In our environment this **will be limited but** may **include items such as** toner cartridges for the photocopiers/printers or general cleaning fluids/sprays.

COSHH (NI) requires UUSU to:

- Assess the risk
- Decide what precautions are needed
- Prevent or adequately control exposure
- Ensure that control measures are used and maintained
- Monitor the situation
- Carry out appropriate health surveillance
- Prepare plans and procedures to deal with accidents, incidents and emergencies
- Ensure employees are properly informed, trained and supervised

Line Managers/Supervisors working with chemicals will have to complete a Risk Assessment. Under no circumstances should any such Asbestos (or suspected Asbestos material) be handled without discussion with Senior Management.

'A Brief Guide to COSHH' produced by the Health and Safety Executive explains these regulations in more detail and can be found at the below website:

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg136.pdf

15. Lone Workers

A lone worker is anyone who works in isolation from their colleagues without close or direct supervision at any time. This could include where you have been allowed flexible working or are working in an office alone.

UUSU will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees who work alone are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

To reduce risk and improve the personal safety of lone workers UUSU will identify lone workers and carry out assessments, we will then implement and evaluate safe systems of work.

As a lone worker as part of any assessment process you are required to:

- Record your whereabouts through your diary, including travel plans **and where you may plan to work later into the evening on campus**
- Let your manager know promptly if your plans change
- Carry out your role and responsibilities safely
- Ensure you understand the local lone worker arrangements specific to your role by speaking to your line manager
- Establish first aid and accident reporting arrangements
- Establish communication arrangements

In the interests of safety and security, all employees who may at times be working on their own are advised to insert the University switchboard number, 02870 123456, into their mobile phone. This number can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

16. Young Workers

If you are a young worker i.e. under the age of 18, we will ensure that you are protected from any additional risk to your health or safety that may arise as a consequence of your inexperience at work to possibly recognise and understand potential hazards in the workplace. You will not be asked to undertake any work that is beyond your physical capabilities and we will ensure that you receive adequate supervision whilst at work.

17. Occupational Health

An occupational health service is provided by Ulster University Health & Safety Services. This service is confidential and aims to promote the health of staff and to prevent illness or injury within the workplace. The occupational health staff are able to advise individuals and Line Managers on all aspects of health and safety at work. Some of the services offered include pre-employment assessments, health surveillance, health promotion, advice on sickness absence and support with ill health. It should be noted that the service provided is advisory in nature and a treatment service is not provided.

18. Training

UUSU carry out their health & safety training via the Blackboard portal that is provided by the University. The courses are a pass or fail and further training will be carried out at the discretion of the line manager. Specific onsite training will be organised and carried out where identified and practical sessions will be held as often as is deemed necessary. To access the online training, [please click here](#).

19. Pandemic or Epidemic Outbreaks

Whilst it is rare that an outbreak of sickness is so significant that it demands additional health and safety action, the Covid-19 pandemic, **which started in 2019** shows it is a possibility. In these instances UUSU will enact separate measures which will include evoking a business continuity plan and specific risk assessment to manage the events and keep staff safe and healthy. Measures could include:

- A period of **complete** remote working
- Online meetings/events to replace face to face activity
- Closure of campuses and/or services
- Testing and vaccination routines
- Periods of isolation from campuses/colleagues