

Responsibilities of Facility Managers and Users in GeoSciences

Introduction

The excellent operation, management and development of facilities in GeoSciences is a shared responsibility involving facility managers, staff and users.

Facilities are defined as any equipment/activity/infrastructure that generates and supports research and/or teaching - other than IT, office equipment and space. Facilities include field equipment, workshop, geochemistry, sample preparation and measurement laboratories, equipment preparation and calibration space, and research-dedicated experimental space and equipment.

The Facility Manager role is key for ensuring excellence in delivering research, teaching and training, and the development of GeoSciences facilities. In addition to the day-to-day management of the facility, the role of the Facility Manager is, with the user base, to lead the development of the facility.

Users of Facilities range from individual dissertation undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, postgraduate research students and academic and research staff, to use of Facilities for teaching course delivery, research groups and institutes looking to extend an existing research capability or develop a new research area in GeoSciences, and other schools, other universities and research organisations or commercial companies looking for specific skills and techniques.

This document defines the role of the facility manager and describes their duties and responsibilities. For facility managers of small research facilities (SRFs), additional responsibilities related to running and managing SRFs are also described. Finally, the responsibilities of users are listed.

Any queries about health and safety and facility management and use that cannot be resolved locally should be brought in the first instance to the Health & Safety Manager and the Facilities Senior Management Team (FSMT) as appropriate.

Responsibilities of Facility Managers

In GeoSciences the scope of the facility managers ranges from PIs managing a specialist research-grant funded facility with a small number of research users, to academic staff managing a laboratory with a range of student and research users funded from multiple sources, to designated SRF and underpinning facilities managed by technical/research/academic staff.

Although the relevance of different activities may differ between facilities, all facility managers are expected to provide a central point of contact and advice for users and have responsibilities regarding the day-to-day operational management of the facility (e.g. bench space, housekeeping, and underpinning consumables and equipment servicing) and leading the planning and development of the facility.

List of Facility Manager duties

Note that not all of the below are relevant to all facilities, e.g. for facilities in which chemicals are not used.

- Provide advice and guidance to users on potential exploratory work
- Induct new staff/students to the facility and provide user training
- Manage user requests and working space
 - When work changes or new work is planned, users will liaise with relevant facility managers on availability of space and other issues related to location and type of work to be done. The facility manager will advise. In many cases the facility manager is the only person who will have an overview of up and coming time and space commitments.
- Be responsible for Health & Safety (H&S) implementation within the facility in accordance with School H&S Procedures, taking advice from the School H&S Manager as required.
- Act as the main point of contact for visitors, contractors, FSMT, H&S, etc.
 - Visitors and contractors will not be allowed into laboratories without first contacting facility managers.
- Act as main contact for servicing, maintenance, underpinning consumables and cleanliness of common equipment such as balances, centrifuges, fume cupboards etc.
- Medium term planning (equipment replacement, new equipment, facility development, evaluation of staffing needs, staff development and retention of expertise, etc.)
- Ensure tidiness and cleanliness of the facility. It is not intended that facility managers necessarily carry out the cleaning but advise users of procedures and if necessary report misuse to FSMT.
- Report any problems with fabric of the estate, fixtures, and fittings to geos.technical-support@ed.ac.uk
 - Facility managers should encourage all users to communicate these issues to them as a central point.
- Maintain an inventory of chemicals stored in the lab
 - This is a requirement of the COSHH regulations.
- Maintain a central repository of COSHH and other H&S information
 - Conduct and update COSHH assessments for routine techniques conducted within the facility.
 - Documents provided by users should always be easily available.
- Maintain a stock of clean lab coats for visitors
- Ensure any spill kits are in place and adequate
 - These are provided by the Health & Safety Manager as advised by facility managers.
- Ensure eyewash bottles are in date and full
 - By informing the Health & Safety Manager.
- Ensure any soap and towels are topped up
 - By informing cleaners.
- Ensure fume cupboards are maintained in a clean and tidy state
 - As with other tidiness/cleanliness issues it is not intended that facility managers necessarily carry out the cleaning but advise users of procedures and if necessary report misuse.

- Maintain a register of chemicals used in fume cupboards
- Where analyses are conducted for a user the results should be stored in an access-limited location (e.g. bespoke SRF folder or equivalent)
- Liaise with FSMT as requested, e.g. reporting, surveys of capability and space, etc.
- Inform FSMT as soon as any issues arise

List of additional duties for Managers of Small Research Facilities (SRFs)

- Check email regularly and endeavour to respond to user enquiries within 3 working days, apart from away on leave when an “Out of Office” email autoreply should be set up
- Advise users on charges for SRF use, using EI for commercial users.
- Recovering salary for consultancy use of SRFs is only permissible where the SRF Manager provides some additional service over and above provision of facility access and analysis results, such as interpretation of results in a report. SRF Managers should contact FSMT for approval of consultancy as devolved from Head of School.
- Ensure SRF technical request forms are in place and funding advised by the School Finance Office before undertaking any work
- Rename SRF technical request forms as complete in a timely fashion
- Check the status of the SRF account at least monthly
- Maintain usage records using the Usage template
- Complete the Facility Manager sections of SRF annual reports
- Support SRF marketing activities (both internal and external), including ensuring web pages are up-to-date
 - Webpage content can be updated via John Craven or PR&STSM.

Responsibilities of Facility Users

- Consult with the facility manager before using a facility
- Follow H&S procedures as set-out by the facility manager/staff and ensure that their activities are risk assessed and that suitable and sufficient control measures are in place
- Provide COSHH assessments for non-routine techniques conducted within the facility
- Keep working space clean and tidy
- Ensure all samples are labelled clearly with user name and disposal date and are stored appropriately
- Dispose of all materials and samples and clean equipment you have been using at the end of project
- Follow safe working practices, including lone working procedures and out-of-hours working (see: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/geosciences/intranet/safety>)
- When importing and working with foreign soils and plant material ensure they are stored, handled and disposed of following the School’s licences
- Complete a SRF technical request form before conducting work in a SRF