

**School of GeoSciences  
Health & Safety Committee  
Minutes of Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014  
Room 339, Grant Institute, King's Buildings**

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**1 Apologies etc.**

**Present:**

(RC) Richard Chalkley (H&S Manager for School) (Chair)  
(ST) Sandy Tudhope (HoS)  
(GW) Graham Walker deputising for Gordon Waugh (Facilities Manager)  
(AN) Anthony Newton (Drummond Street)  
(KH) Kate Heal (Graduate Organisation / Crew Building)  
(PF) Pat Ferguson (ECCI)  
(PC) Pádraig Ó Conbhuí (Postgraduate Organisation)

**Apologies**

(NDJ) Nimi Dan-Jumbo (Drummond Street Library)  
(WW) Wyn Williams (Teaching Staff Representative)  
(GWa) Gordon Waugh (Scientific, Technical and Physical Resources)

**Not Present**

(YN) Yann Salmon (Research Staff)  
(SS) Saran Sohi (Biochar)

**2. Approve Minutes of Last Meeting**

Meeting were approved unanimously without comment or amendment.

**3. Review of Outstanding Actions from Last Meeting**

Date	Minute	Action	Action by	Deadline	Status
26/09/13	6	Possibility of running First Aid Courses as day-release.	HP	03/12/13	John Nimmo in the corporate team has said this would be possible. No reply: will chase.
26/09/13	7.4	FA Kit to be resituated outside Grant Attic	GW	Dec 13	Checked March 14. Kit lying on floor broken and largely empty. Restocked. New Kit ordered.
4/6/13	6	The locks in Geography show that any combination can be used.	GW	ASAP	Awaiting Update

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**4. Review of Completed Actions Since Last Meeting**

Date	Minute	Action	Action by	Deadline	Status
4/12/12	7	Signs to show emergency/security numbers around the Drummond Street site	HP	Mar 13	Security Section Posters distributed. More available from RC if any areas missed.
4/6/13	6	The sensors in the new corridor of the Grant are not sensitive enough so a staff member has to try & lock up in the dark as the lights don't come on.	GW	Sept 13	G. Walker has passed this matter to Estates and Buildings. No further comment has been made. Assumed completed by GW.
26/09/13	7.1	Gas Safety Course required. Liaise with other Safety Managers to organise a course	HP	03/12/13	Eight Geosciences staff and students attended the course run by the School of Biological Sciences.
26/09/13	7.3	No H&S Representative for Biochar Labs. Follow up with Saran and Ondrej	HP	03/12/13	Saran Sohi has accepted the role.
26/09/13	7.5	ECCI coming on-line. Pat Ferguson needing to get set up with H&S documentation / procedures	HP	03/12/13	RC has scheduled fortnightly meetings with Pat Ferguson to progress this issue.

**5. Review of Actions Generated at the Last Meeting**

Date	Minute	Action	Action by	Deadline	Status
03/12/13	8.3	Mice infestation: Grant to Attic	Gordon Waugh	March 2014	Several visits from Edinburgh Council Pest Control. Eradication difficult due to high level of food debris in area.

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**6 Final Approval of Health and Safety Policy/Manual**

Final approval of the Health and Safety Policy/Manual was sought following the review conducted during 2013 and amendments made during Q1 2014. Approval was given unanimously. **RC to upload to intranet**

**7 Accidents and Incidents**

Accidents and incidents since last meeting were discussed. Of note was the incident involving asbestos within the John Murray Laboratories. An old hotplate was being removed from under a bench. The top of the hotplate detached from the bottom of the hotplate and a small quantity of asbestos was released. The laboratory was promptly sealed off and the asbestos team called. The University Asbestos Team was informed. They responded rapidly and the incident was cleared up the following working day. Two members of the technical staff may have been briefly exposed to asbestos. The School has other equipment which contains asbestos (see later item).

**8 Inspections and Audits**

**a. Laboratory Inspections**

To date, two area/laboratory inspections have been conducted: Crew Laboratories and Grant Institute Ground Floor. This has given rise to a number of issues:

**i. Gas Safety**

It has been noted during the inspections that there are a number of gas regulators beyond their working life which are in use. It was explained to the committee that the HSE website points to the BCGA guidance which states that cylinder regulators should not be used beyond the recommended manufacturers working life unless they can be recertified as fit for use. Unfortunately, very few manufacturers will recertify regulators to operate beyond their design a life as they have no interest in doing so and regulators are built to a price. As such, most regulators will need to be replaced when they reach the end of their five year working life.

RC and GW have already removed out of date regulators from the Crew Laboratories.

The committee discussed how to ensure that regulators are replaced once they are end of life. It was agreed that the Health and Safety Manager would create an inventory of compressed gas regulators within the School and would develop a system where the use of compressed gas within the School was subject to prior authorisation and reordering of compressed gas cylinders would only be allowed where an authorisation was in place. **Action: RC**

**ii Asbestos**

The incident with the asbestos release from the redundant hotplate highlighted the fact that the School has a number of items of equipment which contain asbestos. This has been further verified during inspection tours. Advice has been sought from the University Asbestos Team who have indicated that an inventory of such equipment needs to be created and such items to be inspected on a regular basis to

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ensure that the asbestos is not deteriorating. In addition, it is suggested that the School consider a programmed replacement of such items over a number of years.

It was agreed that the Health and Safety Manager would create a register of such items and work with equipment users to ensure regular inspection. In addition, indicative costs of replacement would be provided to SPARC. **Action: RC**

iii Housekeeping

A recurrent theme during inspections has been housekeeping. There is a significant issue with respect to the availability of storage resulting in a significant amount of equipment and samples being stored on the floor or shelves at high level. It is not clear to what extent the level of clutter is due to items not being rationalised and disposed when they are no longer required or whether more storage is indeed required. The committee agreed that School Staff and Students should look to their own areas and dispose of equipment and samples which are no longer required. **Action: All to communicate to their colleagues.**

b. **AON Insurance Audit**

A Health and Safety Auditor from AON Insurance (the University's Insurer) visited the School on 3<sup>rd</sup> March to conduct an audit all the subjects of Training, Workplace Inspections, Display Screen Equipment Assessments and Working with Animals.

The school generally performed well with some suggestions for improvement around the recording and structuring of health and safety training. The report should be received during April.

c. **Drummond Fire Risk Assessment**

On 21 January Graham Ferguson from the University Fire Department conducted a fire risk assessment on Drummond Street. The building was assigned a Moderate rating. Some recommendations have been made however with the exception of housekeeping related issues, the remaining issues with the building relate to the age and design of the fire detection system and the age and fabric of the building neither of which are within the remit of the school. Action will be taken by the Health Safety Manager. This will be managed through the workplace inspection scheduled for the end of March. **Action: RC**

**9 Geography Laboratories Update**

ST/RC gave the Committee a brief update with respect to the Geography Laboratories. A proposal has been received from the University's preferred contractor however the cost is significant and will require some down time of the laboratories. These works, if progressed, should ensure the safe operation of the Geography Laboratories in the medium term (5+ years). A meeting in the College Office is scheduled for 24 March. A further update will be given at the next meeting.

**10 Display Screen Equipment Assessments-Cardinus**

The committee was briefed on the web-based system which the University has procured to perform display screen equipment training and risk assessments (Cardinus). Rollout of the system within the School is due to begin during summer 2014. It was noted that rolling such a system out would require time input from the Health and Safety Manager and would

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undoubtedly uncover desk related issues which would require correcting. Where these merely require adjustments to existing desk setups there would be no cost incurred. However where users required items to be purchased, moderate expense could be expected. If a user required a new chair this expense could be £6-700 per user. As such, the rollout would be undertaken in a phased manner to spread associated costs.

**11. First Aid/Defibrillators**

It was noted that there were now four defibrillators within the School of Geosciences. These are sited in the Grant Institute, Crew Building, Drummond Street and the ECCI.

Concerns have been expressed by one member of staff who is aware of an incident within Edinburgh Leisure where two members of staff were disciplined for not using a defibrillator to attempt resuscitation of a member of the public who had collapsed. Assurance was requested that the presence of defibrillators within the School would not result in a disciplinary action being taken against any member of staff trained or otherwise for using or failing to use a defibrillator within the School. The Edinburgh Leisure incident related to staff who were employed to be lifesavers. As such, the circumstances are significantly different to that within the School of Geosciences.

It was the express view of the committee that first aiders are volunteers and should provide first aid to the best of their abilities however it would be most inappropriate to discipline a First Aider unless they took action which was outwith their training. Likewise, the model of defibrillator which has been purchased is identical to that found in shopping centres, railway stations and other public places. This model is designed to be used by someone with little or no training. The first action of an untrained member of staff should be to raise the alarm however, as they can do no harm using a defibrillator. It is highly unlikely that disciplinary action would be taken should an untrained member of staff attempt to use a defibrillator in an emergency situation. RC to clarify the University position with the central Health and Safety Department. **Action: RC**

It was also noted that there are a number of gaps in the provision of official University First Aiders across the school. Unfortunately, due to prescriptive HSE guidance as to what constitutes an acceptable first aid training course, the staff and students trained in Fieldwork First Aid do not qualify as "First Aid at Work" qualified. It is noted that the risk to the staff and students of the school is low as approximately 100 staff and students are trained in Fieldwork First Aid however the Health and Safety Manager would look for volunteers to be trained in First Aid at Work. **Action: RC**

**12. Biochar-Occupational Hygiene Survey**

The committee was informed that following the incomplete combustion event in the Stage III Biochar plant last year and an enquiry regarding respiratory protective equipment to the central Health and Safety Department it had been recommended by the Health and Safety Department that an occupational hygiene survey of the Biochar Laboratories and pilot plant was undertaken. To this end, the school has engaged IOM to quantify exposures to hazardous substances generated within the Biochar Facility. This work will be conducted over the next 3 to 4 months.

**13. AOB**

The committee was informed that the Health and Safety Manager was in the process of reviewing the risk assessment forms for overseas travel and fieldwork. This was a result of

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feedback from staff and students that the current system could be significantly improved. A streamlined system has been produced and is being trialled with a few key individuals prior to being put out for wider consultation. Several of the committee members volunteered to trial the forms.

A question was raised as to why a £10 deposit is required to attend the Fieldwork First Aid or Expedition First Aid courses. The committee was informed that historically, there had been a number of attendees booking onto these courses and not attending. As the Fieldwork First Aid course costs £150 per delegate and the Expedition First Aid course costs £280 per delegate, the system of requiring deposits had been introduced by the previous Health Safety Manager to increase attendance rates. This has largely been successful. The committee agreed that the system should be continued.

The issue of lighting on Level 3 of the Crew Building being turned off when a particular member of staff was working in the building was raised. The member of staff concerned is sensitive to fluorescent lighting. There have been changes in the building which have reduced the ambient light level in the third floor corridor. As such, it was requested that the lighting in this area could be reconsidered. **GW/RC to discuss and investigate a solution**

The committee noted that PF was moving to a new post within the school and as such ECCI would require a new representative on the Health and Safety Committee. **Action: RC**

It was reported to the committee that across the King's Buildings campus there are a number of zebra crossings however there is not one outside the Crew Building. This road is used by the University Shuttle and Lothian Buses. GW reported that Estates and Buildings intended to provide a zebra crossing at this point during refurbishments of some of the public spaces within KB planned for this summer.

**Meeting closed at 15:15 hours**