

Health and Safety Policy

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**YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY**

This document sets out the University's Health and Safety Policy

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Health and Safety Policy

Scope

The Health and Safety Policy sets out York St John University's commitment to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all members of the University community.

This policy applies to all activities and facilities considered to be wholly or partly under the University's control. It covers all members of staff, students, researchers, visitors and others involved with those activities and accessing those facilities.

The Policy describes:

- the University's commitment to discharge its duty of care to anyone who may be potentially impacted by its undertaking;
- the roles and responsibilities of specified employees, and the arrangements in place to secure the health, safety and welfare of all people to whom we owe a duty of care; and,
- the expectations on employees, students, and contractors to support the University's commitment to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

The Policy is supported by a range of other policies, codes of practice and guidance that may impose additional duties on specified employees. These can be found on the University's [health and safety intranet pages](#).

Introduction

Health and safety law establishes a duty of care for various parties to ensure the well-being of individuals who may be impacted by their actions or negligence in the workplace. The primary duty of care lies with employers towards their employees. This duty involves identifying significant risks to employees' health, safety, and welfare and implementing control measures to mitigate these risks to an acceptable level, as reasonably practicable.

Employers are also responsible for the health, safety, and welfare of others who may be affected by their operations. While certain tasks may be delegated to others within the line management structure, the ultimate responsibility for meeting the duty of care rests with the employer. To ensure compliance, employers should establish suitable governance arrangements to verify the effective completion of delegated tasks and take corrective action if necessary. The level of monitoring should be proportionate to the level of risk involved.

Individuals also have a duty of care under health and safety law to protect the health, safety, and welfare of those affected by their actions or omissions while carrying out their employer's tasks. The extent of this duty depends on the level of control the individual has over the execution of work tasks.

Definitions

'Competence'

There is no legal definition of competence. However, in a health and safety context this is generally understood to mean having the required skills, expertise, experience and training to carry out a required task safely¹.

¹ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/competence/what-is-competence.htm>

‘Undertaking’

Case law has established that in the context of health and safety law “undertaking” has a very wide-meaning and includes not only core business activities and functions, but also any ancillary activities, such as the cleaning, maintenance and repair of buildings, plant or equipment associated with the employer’s business regardless of who performs these activities.

‘So far as is reasonably practicable’

This principle is applied to the management of risks and whether a duty holder has done enough to meet their duty of care. Case law has defined this as being about weighing risk against the effort (time, expense, resources) needed to further reduce it to an acceptable level. The law presumes that the balance of this judgement should be in favour of reducing the risk. It is only if the effort is grossly disproportionate to the risk that this standard can be deemed to have been met.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Statement of Intent

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Statement is displayed across all York St John University buildings and areas of work. **See Appendix 1.**

Organisation roles and responsibilities

The following section sets out individual roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for managing health, safety and welfare issues at the University. All defined organisation roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are subject to the caveat of 'so far as is reasonably practicable'.

1) Board of Governors

Ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters within the University sits with the University’s Board of Governors. The Board has responsibility for:

- setting and monitoring University strategy and policy, including the overarching health and safety policy;
- monitoring health and safety performance and seeking appropriate reassurance that health and safety performance is satisfactory; and,
- recommending and monitoring improvements where health and safety performance is found to be unsatisfactory.

The Board has delegated management responsibility for health, safety and welfare matters to the Vice-Chancellor.

2) Vice-Chancellor (VC)

The VC is the principal executive officer of the University and is accountable to the Board of Governors for the implementation of the University’s health and safety policy and for monitoring health and safety performance.

The Board has delegated executive authority to the VC to set a specific health and safety policy and for agreeing University performance standards for the management of health, safety and welfare matters.

The VC has delegated executive accountability for the delivery of specific aspects of day-to day health and safety matters through University’s Executive Board and the associated line management structures.

3) Executive Board (EB)

The activities and operation of the University are directed and controlled by EB and the associated line management structures. EB, under the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, is the forum where delegated authority to make changes to policy, including health and safety policy, is exercised. EB consider and attempt to resolve health and safety implications arising from the strategic and operational decisions that it makes.

EB receive regular reports on organisational health and safety performance via the minutes of the University's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

EB members are also accountable to the VC for the effective management of health and safety within the Professional Services areas falling within their line management. The key responsibility is to make routine enquiries of direct reports, including where necessary making requests for supporting information to be provided, to satisfy themselves that health and safety responsibilities are being correctly managed. Where issues with health and safety performance are identified then the relevant EB member should agree actions with the relevant Director. Significant issues should be brought to the attention of the VC. General feedback on health and safety performance should be provided to the VC as relevant.

4) University Secretary and Registrar

In addition to their obligations as a member of Executive Board, the University Secretary and Registrar has been appointed by the VC to ensure that the University has effective arrangements in place to consult members of the University community on matters of health and safety. The University Secretary and Registrar chairs the University's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee. In this capacity, the University Secretary and Registrar has delegated authority to approve certain health and safety policies, standards and guidance agreed at the university. Where such items are likely to impact the University on a wider basis, then the University Secretary and Registrar is responsible for bringing these to EB for consideration.

The University Secretary and Registrar is responsible for the appointment of a "Competent Person" as required under health and safety legislation and for the performance of the University Health, Safety and Welfare Service.

5) Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development (HROD)

The Director of HR has additional health and safety responsibilities to ensure arrangements are in place to provide health surveillance and occupational health services for staff when required. Human Resources and Organisational Development also provide some training activities that may assist in ensuring good health and safety practices are in place.

The Director of HROD is responsible for monitoring sickness and absence that may form a up to date picture of wellbeing within the University, which will trigger control measures when applicable.

The Director of HROD also manages some health and safety focused policies and procedures such as:

- Driving for Work Policy;
- Menopause Policy;
- No Smoking Policy;
- Policy On Alcohol and Drugs at Work;
- Risk Assessment Guidance: Maternity & Breastfeeding Parents;
- Stress Management Policy; and,
- Volunteering Policy.

6) Director of Estates Management

The Director of Estates Management has additional accountabilities in that they have responsibility for health and safety matters associated with the buildings and infrastructure falling under their control which includes University owned accommodation. This includes (but not limited to) the provision and maintenance of safe buildings, fire safety, safe facilities and safe grounds, and encompasses any statutory testing or monitoring of building fabric, services and infrastructure which includes regular maintenance and reactive repair where necessary to ensure safety.

The Director of Estate Management is the responsible person in respect of compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 with duty holder responsibilities for asbestos, electrical and gas safety, water Hygiene and construction design management.

7) Health and Safety Adviser

The Health and Safety Adviser has been appointed as the University's "Competent Person" and professional lead on occupational health, safety and welfare matters. The post holder has delegated authority from the VC to stop activities that put people at imminent risk of harm.

The Health and Safety Adviser is responsible for:

- providing advice and guidance on all matters of occupational health, safety and welfare;
- creating and maintaining a safety management system;
- identifying competency requirements and advising on how these can be met;
- advising and communicating on the application of specific health and safety legislation;
- investigating accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences or reports of occupational ill health in order to identify the potential for legal consequences and to identify action required to prevent recurrence;
- monitoring health and safety performance across the University and providing termly reports to University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and an annual report to the Board of Governors;
- supporting the professional development of staff with accountability for providing advice on health and safety within their School/Directorate;
- liaising with the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency and other regulatory authorities on matters of health and safety when required; and,
- managing an ongoing programme of audits of compliance in line with the agreed audit schedule proposed at the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

8) Heads and Deans of School/Directors of Professional Services

Heads and Deans of Schools and Directors of Professional Services are accountable for the health and safety and welfare at work of all the staff that they line manage and for others whose health or safety may be affected, to any extent, by the work of their department, directorate or service. They are responsible for ensuring that:

- the Health & Safety Policy is implemented in all areas under their direct control and for all matters relating to health and safety within their areas;
- they have an appropriate awareness of the University's Health and Safety Policy, standards and guidance and the minimum requirements of legislation as they relate to the work of their department, directorate or service;
- they appoint a local Health and Safety representative;
- there is a provision and maintenance of a working environment for their employees that is safe, without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work;

- high risk activities (such as: use of hazardous substances, lasers and international travel) are appropriately resourced and effective control measures are in place;
- adequate resources and arrangements are in place to manage health and safety on a day-to-day basis;
- departmental staff and students receive any necessary training, information, supervision and instruction required in order to carry out their work safely;
- Information on health and safety is prepared and distributed to all those concerned and that it is understood and followed by all appropriate staff, students and visitors;
- they consult staff on significant matters that may affect health, safety or welfare at work. This requirement can be satisfied by having a regular agenda item at management meetings;
- risk assessments are carried out and safe operating procedures developed;
- they carry out a health and safety inspection of the premises occupied at suitable periods throughout the year and ensure that the significant outcomes of these inspections are recorded;
- they satisfy themselves, by making suitable and sufficient enquiries, that any other duty holders providing services to the school/department (for example contractors) are competent and are adequately meeting their duties;
- accidents, incidents and near misses are properly investigated and appropriate action is taken to prevent recurrence; and,
- they complete the [annual health and safety self-assessment](#) form in a timely manner with supporting improvement plan where applicable.

9) Line Managers and Supervisors

Staff in line management or supervisory positions, including academic members responsible for supervising students, have a crucial role in ensuring the health and safety of the individuals, activities, and projects under their supervision. It is their responsibility to be knowledgeable about health and safety issues, including significant risks and control measures, that are relevant to their specific activities and projects.

When it comes to hazardous activities to be carried out by students, the person supervising must ensure that a thorough risk assessment has been conducted and appropriate control measures have been implemented before the activity begins. This assessment should consider the inexperience or other foreseeable vulnerabilities of the student involved.

The level of supervision provided to employed students should be tailored to their level of experience or competence and should be more extensive than what is expected for more experienced staff members. Line managers and supervisors are expected to adhere to the University's Health and Safety Policy, as well as any associated standards, guidance, and relevant arrangements within their area or activity.

Line managers and supervisors are required to cooperate with their Head of School or Director and will be held accountable for any tasks delegated to them.

10) Staff

All staff are accountable to their line manager for the health and safety of any people that they line manage or supervise and for the health and safety of anyone else who may be affected by their work. Staff are also accountable for the safe management of any premises, equipment and activities under their control.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that they conduct their activities, and those activities over which they have control, in accordance with the University's health and safety policies and relevant statutory provisions. They must co-operate with their line manager/supervisor and head or dean of school or

service so that health and safety responsibilities can be discharged. This responsibility cannot be delegated to others.

11) Casual Workers/Self-employed/Volunteers

This includes those who are not employed as members of staff but who are undertaking work functions for the University. This could include, for example, apprentices or students employed to carry out work for the University, visiting employees of other organisations and volunteers working in university premises and facilities.

Workers are accountable to their line manager for the health and safety of any people that they line manage or supervise and for the health and safety of anyone else who may be affected by their work. Workers are also accountable for the safe management of any premises, equipment and activities under their control.

Workers are responsible for ensuring that they conduct their activities, and those activities over which they have control, in accordance with the University's health and safety policies and relevant statutory provisions. They must co-operate with their line manager/supervisor and head or dean of school or service so that health and safety responsibilities can be discharged. This responsibility cannot be delegated to others.

12) Undergraduate, Post-Graduate Taught and Post-Graduate Research Students and Apprentices

Apprentices and Students, except those in the course of carrying out paid employment (and therefore captured in the section 'Casual Workers/Self-employed/Volunteers' above), are not generally considered to be employees under health and safety legislation. As such, the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act will not normally apply to students.

However, students are required to comply with the University's rules and regulations, and these include a requirement to comply with health and safety instructions, not to misuse or damage equipment provided for their safety or for the safety of others and to comply with relevant aspects of university and local health and safety policy.

13) Visitors and Contractors

Visitors and contractors must comply with the University's health and safety policies, and, where appropriate, follow any local rules whilst on the University's premises.

The University has a legal duty to provide a safe working environment for contractors working on university managed property. Contractors have responsibilities, under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act, for their safety and for the safety of anyone else who may be affected by their work. This includes a responsibility to cooperate with other duty holders in order to discharge that responsibility.

Contractors must have received a health and safety induction before commencement of work on the Campus. Any member of staff responsible for hiring or engaging contractors or temporary labour must ensure that they are competent before authorising work and must liaise with Estates before any work commences.

Arrangements

The University's arrangements for managing specific health and safety issues are described in various health and safety policies, codes of practice and guidance published on [health and safety intranet pages](#).

Consultation with employees

The University has a statutory duty, under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996, to provide a suitable forum to formally consult employees on significant matters of health and safety. This duty is met by the establishment of the University's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Operational Group.

Both trade union and non-trade union safety reps have statutory consultation and inspection rights with regard to matters that affect the health and safety of the staff they represent. They are also invited to take part in School and Support Area safety inspections and local health and safety committees, and be involved in risk management arrangements.

Employees may also raise health and safety concerns directly with their line management or with the health and safety team.

Monitoring health and safety performance

Health and safety performance is managed proactively across the University through a plan of departmental and topic specific audits. Schools and Directorates are responsible for carrying out periodic safety inspections across their own areas.

To ensure that health and safety responsibilities are being properly managed, the University conducts an annual self-assessment exercise. This exercise allows Heads and Deans of Schools and Directors to confirm their compliance with health and safety requirements. The resulting report provides the University's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee assurance that appropriate actions are in place and are being adhered to.

Significant findings from proactive monitoring are reported at departmental level, through management meetings or departmental safety committees where these are established. Any matters that arise are documented on an action plan, which outlines the ownership of specific issues and sets timeframes for corrective action.

Reactive monitoring is carried out by collecting and reporting data on work-related incident and ill-health cases.

The results of all monitoring activities, including the significant findings of any incident investigations are submitted to University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee on a termly basis.

Additionally, an annual health and safety report is submitted to the Board of Governors each November, providing a comprehensive overview of the University's health and safety performance.

Relevant Legislation:

- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 \(MHSWR\)](#)
- [Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977](#)
- [Health and Safety \(Consultation with Employees\) Regulations 1996,](#)

HEALTH, SAFETY and WELLBEING POLICY STATEMENT – 2025/26

York St John University is bound by and will comply with the Health & Safety at Work Act etc 1974 and associated legislation. It will establish and promote a positive health, safety and wellbeing culture with high levels of awareness and understanding within its community; effective processes; and, active cooperation by staff, students (including those employed to carry out work for the University), Casual Workers, Self-employed, Volunteers, contractors and visitors.

This will be people-focused and supported by processes that will ensure that:

- everyone is clear about their personal responsibilities;
- information, instruction, training and supervision is provided to ensure staff are competent to carry out their work safely;
- individuals are pro-active in managing risks in the workplace to prevent injury and work-related ill health and are willing and encouraged to identify opportunities to improve health, safety and wellbeing practices;
- we have sensible and proportionate risk management that meets health and safety standards;
- there are indicators that allow the University to measure and evaluate its performance;
- we adopt a whole University approach to health, safety and wellbeing which emphasises the creation of healthy and sustainable working and learning environments; and,
- university buildings, facilities, equipment and environment support the health, safety and wellbeing of our community.

Organisation and Arrangements

1. Ultimate responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing within the University rests with the Board of Governors.
2. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee advises the Vice Chancellor and Executive Board (and Board of Governors as appropriate) on relevant policy, strategy and performance.
3. Members of the Executive Board will ensure health, safety and wellbeing procedures and standards within their own areas of accountability by reviewing performance, setting objectives, establishing local structures, and ensuring that necessary actions by their teams are completed.
4. All managers are accountable for the health, safety and wellbeing of the people and activities they direct.
5. Every individual member of staff, student, worker, contractor or visitor will take care of their own health, safety and wellbeing; give due consideration to the health and safety of others; not interfere with or misuse facilities that are there in the interests of health and safety; comply with the University's health, safety and wellbeing procedures and standards; and report issues that they cannot address to their line manager.
6. The University will consult with staff and students on health, safety and wellbeing matters including consultation with recognised local Trade Union representatives, discussion at Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and local Directorate School meetings.
7. The University will appoint a Health and Safety Adviser to provide professional advice on health and safety matters and report on health and safety performance.
8. This policy is supported by detailed and robust health, safety and wellbeing guidance made available for staff, students and visitors through the University's website and intranet. It will be kept under review and updated as required by the University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

Vice Chancellor

Chair of Board of Governors

Date:

17.03.2025

9


