

**COU10D074**

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### 1. Introduction

This is the third annual report to Council from the University Health and Safety Executive (UHASE). It covers the calendar year 2010.

The UEA Corporate Plan (2008 to 2012) places a strategic requirement to "Maintain high standards in all areas of corporate responsibility and provide regular reports to Council on the discharge of those responsibilities. (M7)" This report is presented to comply with the reporting requirement, under this strategy, with regards to the management of health and safety standards.

Health and safety laws place duties on the university as an employer and as an owner, and occupier, of premises. Members of Council have responsibility, under these laws, for ensuring suitable health and safety management arrangements are in place at the university. The university's health and safety management arrangements are designed to ensure that corporate aims, legal obligations and moral duties are being met.

### Summary of performance data

Accident numbers in 2010 were slightly below the university's own average over the last 5 years. Serious (reportable) accidents were close to the average level for UEA and in line with the higher education sector target.

There was no serious fires on the university's premises in 2010.

False fire alarms are continuing to be a problem in the university's student residences.

### 2. Activities of UHASE and the University Safety Committees in 2010

#### UHASE

UHASE met in May and November 2010.

#### UHASE

- approved the university policy on the Management of Work-related Stress.
- approved the university's Health and Safety Training Strategy.
- continued to monitor the situation with regard to false fire alarms in residences and tasked
- received updates from Stress Steering Group (tasked to review, revise and implement the university policy on stress management).

- received updates on progress in formulating alcohol, drug and substance abuse policies.
- received and considered the findings of an audit of fire safety arrangements.
- received and considered an annual review of occupational health provision.
- received an update on work to install facilities, in public access buildings, to assist evacuation of persons unable to use stairs.

#### Consultative Committee

The Consultative Committee met in January and May 2010.

#### The Committee

- established its terms of reference and determined to meet 4 times per year.
- considered and provided input on draft stress policy, the draft training strategy, and a draft alcohol policy.

#### Biological Hazards and Genetic Modification Committee

The Biological Hazards and Genetic Modification Committee met in February and October 2010.

#### The Committee

- received and considered reports on on-going microbiological and genetic modification work
- considered and made revisions to the university procedures for microbiological and genetic modification work.
- considered and reviewed the competencies of review panels, which review and approve Containment Level 1 and 2 projects.
- considered a report on the impending Biological Agents and Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations 2010.
- Discussed the arrangements for responding to the Health Protection Agency survey on materials with the potential to contain poliovirus.

#### Fire Safety Committee

The Fire Safety Committee met in January, June and September 2010.

#### The Committee

- discussed:
  - o training for Security staff on new fire system
  - o malicious activations of fire alarms
  - o steam activations of smoke detectors
  - o progress on fire risk assessments
  - o a project to revise the fire strategy for the teaching wall
  - o fire safety signage
  - o evacuation chairs, refuges and lifts

#### Human Tissues Committee

The Human Tissue Committee met in June 2010.

## The Committee

- discussed revisions required to the universities procedures due to revised Codes of Practice issued by the Human Tissue Authority.
- discussed issues involving the availability of human tissue material.

## Radiation Protection Committee

The Radiation Protection Committee met in February 2010.

## The Committee

- received and considered a report from the university's Radiation Protection Adviser
- reviewed data on radiation dose records and usage of radioactive substances
- received and considered a report on an Environment Agency inspection, which took place in November 2009
- reviewed and approved rules for the use of ultraviolet radiation sources in laboratories
- reviewed and approved a revised version of the university's Radiation Protection Rules.
- approved a radon survey in several basement areas of the university which was undertaken during the summer. The results of which found no areas of concern – all areas surveyed had radon levels well below action levels.
- considered a report on the Control of Artificial Optical Radiation at Work Regulations 2010, due to become law on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

## 3. Health and safety performance

An accident is any incident which results in personal injury, however minor (out of or in connection with work). Reportable accidents, dangerous occurrences and diseases are those which the university is required to report under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

### 3.1 Health statistics

#### Sickness absence

The average level of employee absence has reduced to 5.99 days per employee in the year to 31 July 2010 from 6.68 days per employee for the previous 12 months. This compares favourably to the benchmarking figures for all employers for 2009 (2010 data not yet available) which was 7.7 days per employee (all employers) and which was 9.6 days per employee (public sector employers).

#### Reportable Diseases

There were no cases of reportable disease in 2010.

### 3.2 Accidents

Total reported accident numbers in 2010 were below the average level for the previous 5 years. Reported accidents involving members of the public (i.e. non-staff and non-students) were higher than in recent years. Comparisons with previous years are made below:

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	309	305	266	260	252	267
Staff	257	240	204	186	179	186
Students	22	32	38	41	26	29
Others	30	30	24	33	47	52
Reportable	10	8	17	8	13	15

The numbers of accidents are small and equate approximately to one accident for every 20 years of service for each staff member and one accident for about every 500 years of study for each student and therefore it is important not to read any particular significance into the year by year changes of these accident numbers. It would not be unreasonable to surmise that for the average student and the average staff member that the rate of accidents are higher than this and that these figures may likely indicate under-reporting of accidents.

#### Serious injuries

Reportable accidents are categorised into deaths, major injuries, over 3-day injuries (accidents which result in incapacity for work for more than three consecutive days) , and dangerous occurrences (certain incidents which have the potential for causing serious injury without actually having done so). The university is also required to report to any accident to a non-employee which resulting in their being taken to hospital.

There were 15 reportable accidents in 2010

Two of which were major injuries:

- a student fractured a bone in her foot slipping on steps next to a swimming pool on another employer's premises.
- a work experience student fractured her wrist when she fell on to it when attempting to crouch down.

Two members of the public were taken to hospital as a result of accidents at the university:

- One individual tripped on a metal barrier in the car park injuring her cheek bone.
- One individual grazed and cut her knees and chin after falling over in the Square.

Of the other 11 reported accidents (over three day accidents), 7 were due to slips/trips and 4 were due to manual handling incidents.

#### Dangerous Occurrences

There were no reportable dangerous occurrences in 2010:

Comparison to other national accident figures

It can be difficult to compare accident rates at the university with those of others in the sector because there may be different accident reporting behaviours. At some universities, staff and students may be very good at reporting accidents resulting in their universities having poor accident rates relative to the poorer reporting universities. This may particularly be true with regard to minor injuries (major injuries and over 3 day injuries are more likely to be recorded due to absence from, or inability to, work).

Accident rates are more likely to be higher in the occupations where manual work and other physical activities take place (such as maintenance, catering and cleaning). At universities where such services have been placed with contractors there will be a higher proportion of lower risk occupations in the staff work force and so one would expect lower accident rates at these universities. Unfortunately national data for accident rates at universities does not provide information on the breakdown of occupations within staff work forces. UEA has contracted out very little of its maintenance, catering and cleaning work.

A comparison of UEA injuries per 1000 at risk with other Higher Education establishments, in 2010, is given in the table below

		Other HEs 2010	UEA 2010
Staff	Major Injury	0.4	0
	Over 3-day absence injury	2.0	2.8
	Total injury	31.7	46.5
Students	Major injury	0.02	0.07
	Sent to hospital	0.14	0
	Total injury	2.6	2.0

In 2000 the government set up an initiative to 'Revitalise Health and Safety'. Sectors in the economy were expected to set targets to be met by the year 2010. The following table compares the rate of staff RIDDOR reportable accidents at UEA in recent years to the Revitalising targets for the higher education sector (injuries per 1000 at risk). Slips and trips are the biggest cause of major injuries nationally and manual handling injuries are the biggest cause of over 3 day injuries. These types of injuries were therefore chosen by UCEA, in agreement with the Health and Safety Executive, as appropriate categories for which to have target rates in the HE sector.

	Reportable Total	Manual Handling	Slips and trips
UEA 2006	3.2	0.4	2.0
UEA 2007	6.3	2.0	2.0
UEA 2008	2.7	0.0	1.9
UEA 2009	2.8	0.6	1.3
UEA 2010	2.7	1.0	1.7
Sector Average 2010	2.2	0.6	0.9
Revitalising Target	3.6	0.8	0.8

The following table compares the rates of accidents (injuries per 1000 at risk) at UEA with the rates at six other similar universities (Bath, Essex, Kent, Lancaster, Nottingham, Surrey and Warwick). UEA figures are given in bold italics. The individual identities of the other universities are not known. The staff reportable rate for UEA in 2010 is 2.75.

	Staff Report Rate	Staff Total Rate	Student Rep Rate	Student Total Rate
	1.41	30.60	0.75	4.12
	1.53	32.23	0.00	0.74
	2.13	44.37	0.15	6.49
	2.60	81.19	0.07	1.72
	2.61	60.93	0.10	3.16
	<b>2.75</b>	<b>46.48</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2.03</b>
	3.66	76.70	0.25	2.10
	5.18	47.01	0.07	1.51
<b>Average:</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>52.44</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>2.73</b>

Reported fires

Date	Building/Area	Cause Of Fire
08/01/2010	Earlham Hall	Recycling bins set alight
23/02/2010	Wolfson Close	Possibly maliciously set fire in toilet
01/03/2010	University Village (ELM)	Burnt food
15/03/2010	Colney Link	Tree alight
10/04/2010	Norfolk Terrace	Burnt food
12/04/2010	The Street	Lighted cigarette in bin
20/04/2010	Library	Roofing contractors
06/05/2010	ARTS 2	Cigarette smouldering in cigarette bin
03/06/2010	The Broad	Bonfire
12/06/2010	Colman House	Cooking fumes
21/06/2010	Colman House	Burnt food
03/10/2010	Main Car Park	Car fire
12/10/2010	Chemistry	Chemical reaction
12/10/2010	Chemistry	Chemical reaction
02/11/2010	Paston House	Grill pan
08/11/2010	Chemistry	Chemical reaction with water
18/11/2010	Chemistry	Faulty chem/lab equipment
03/12/2010	Britten House	Burnt Food
08/12/2010	Catering Block	Fire in waste bin

### Reported false fire alarms

Frequent false fire alarms degrade fire safety as they lead to the assumption by building occupants that any alarms that sound are false. Consequently occupants can respond poorly, or not at all, to such alarms and thereby place themselves and others at risk in a real fire emergency.

Calendar year	All buildings	Residential buildings	Non-residential buildings	No. attended by fire brigade	% attended by fire brigade
2010	449	376	73	15	3
2009	444	360	84	11	2
2008	410	340	70	18	4
2007	397	310	87	63	16
2006	241	153	88	147	61
2005	215	136	79	135	62
2004	220	175	45	105	47

### Cause of false fire alarms in residences

Calendar year	Malicious	Steam from shower	Other eg cooking
2010	74	127	175
2009	87	105	168
2008	54	137	149
2007	44	118	148
2006	32	10	111