



Heads of School (or equivalent) model list of duties

As per the University Health and Safety Policy [Framework: Organisation Section 10](#), Heads of School, and managers of other equivalent autonomous units, etc., are responsible, through Heads of College, to the University Court for the management of health and safety matters within the area of the University under their control. Besides the Heads of Academic School, the term is taken to include Heads of administrative and service departments, and managers of any premises administered by the University Court.

Heads of Schools (or equivalent), together with senior members of staff and School Safety Advisers, where appointed, are expected to take the initiative in promoting and monitoring the health and safety of all persons liable to be affected by School activities under their control.

All Heads of School should also make themselves aware of the University Health and Safety Policy, [Framework: Arrangements](#) document.

General responsibilities

- i. Ensure the existence of a local School Health and Safety Policy:

Each Head of School must ensure the existence of an effective written and well publicised policy for managing health and safety within their school and must ensure that employees and students are aware of their role in the fulfilment of this policy.

The University Health and Safety Policy is in two parts: the University Health and Safety Policy and the Framework document (Organisation and Arrangements), with accompanying Codes of Practice, centrally issued guidance and the local school Health and Safety Policy must supplement these corporate policies. In large or diverse Schools, the School policy may be accompanied or aided by other local policies or procedures as appropriate. A [template policy for low risk schools](#) is available online. You must review the local School Health and Safety Policy on a regular basis; we recommend between 3-5 years, as well as if any material changes have occurred or after any leadership changes.

- ii. Monitor the local Health and Safety Policy on a regular basis including regular audits:

Each Head of School must periodically verify the effectiveness of the school health and safety policy by monitoring the policy and must ensure the carrying into effect of any changes as may be required. Heads of School must ensure that School/departmental personnel comply and co-operate as fully as possible with any monitoring and auditing measures implemented centrally by the University.



- iii. Ensure adequate provision of information, instruction and training is available and that appropriate staff attend, in order that work can be carried out competently and safely:

Each Head of School must ensure the adequate provision of information, instruction and training, in particular any mandatory training, in health and safety matters and such supervision as is necessary for members of the School/department on commencing work and as required (refresher training) thereafter.

- iv. Ensure all instances of fires, instances of occupational ill health, accidents and dangerous occurrences within the School are reported to the Director of Health and Safety, as soon as possible, and that this record is regularly reviewed for prompt corrective action:

Each Head of School must ensure that all fires, instances of occupational ill health, accidents and dangerous occurrences within the school are recorded and reported to the Director of Health and Safety, as soon as possible, and that this record is regularly reviewed for prompt corrective action. Reports should be made using the [University's online accident and incident reporting system](#). No accident should be considered too trivial to report.

- v. Appoint a School (Area) Safety Adviser, or Health and Safety Manager as appropriate:

Each Head of School must appoint a School (Area) Safety Adviser or Health and Safety Manager as appropriate, to take a special interest in the promotion of health and safety matters, to provide a first level of advice and to act on behalf of the Head of School in respect of these matters. A model list of duties which a Head of School may delegate to the School Safety Adviser can be found in the [School Safety Advisers page](#) of the Safety Roles section of the website. These duties may only occupy a part of the time of the person concerned, but the Head of School should ensure that sufficient resources, in terms of time, finance and space are allocated to enable the person concerned to function efficiently and effectively. The Head of School will automatically assume the role of the School (Area) Safety Adviser, by default, if a formal appointment is not made.

In large or geographically diverse schools, the Head of School may wish to appoint local safety Adviser(s) to assist the School Safety Adviser in fulfilling this role.

Many areas with high risks may appoint professional Health and Safety Managers/Advisers. Their main responsibility is to oversee the health and



safety of their particular College, School or campus, as applicable. Their duties, therefore, will extend beyond the 'voluntary' School Safety Adviser role and this will be communicated within each particular College, School or work area by the Head of College, School or work area.

vi. Appoint a School Health and Safety Committee:

A Head of School must appoint a School Health and Safety Committee to advise both themselves and the School Safety Adviser on specific matters whenever justified by the nature and extent of risks. Such committees should include members of the academic and technical staff, Trade Union Safety Representatives (if appointed) and representatives from the student body.

In Schools where risks are low, and the appointment of a School Health and Safety Committee is not justified, health and safety should be a standing item on the agenda of management meetings, at School level or below.

vii. Ensure all fire safety arrangements are implemented in their School:

Each Head of School must ensure that arrangements for fire safety are in place for all buildings under their control. See specific section on Fire Safety below for a more comprehensive list of duties in relation to fire safety.

viii. Ensure that all School equipment is maintained in a safe condition and that proper steps are taken to repair faults in equipment and to remedy any defects which occur in the services and fabric of the School:

Each Head of School should ensure that all school equipment is maintained in a safe condition and that proper steps are taken to repair faults in equipment and to remedy any defects which occur in the services and fabric of the school. Local procedures for the reporting of faults must be implemented and all staff and student made aware of these. Suitable follow up procedures to ensure faulty equipment or fabric of the school are fixed, should also be implemented.

ix. Establish a (joint) health and safety policy for University employees and students when occupying premises in joint ownership with another institution, or occupying a University building in which workers from another institution are employed:

Heads of Schools or research units occupying premises in joint ownership with another institution, or occupying a University building in which workers from another institution are employed must establish a (joint) health and safety policy for University employees and students. This policy should set up an effective means of consultation between the various interested parties



over common problems of health and safety.

- x. Report at least annually, to the Director of Corporate Services, on aspects of the implementation of the health and safety policy within their area of responsibility:

The University Court cannot delegate its own responsibilities or duties under the law but, in order to fulfil its legal obligations arising from overall responsibility, it must monitor the effectiveness of all arrangements made to secure compliance with the law. Each Head of School must report at least annually, to the Director of Corporate Services on aspects of the implementation of the health and safety policy within their area of responsibility. The Director of Corporate Services will report, as appropriate, to the University Court. This is usually by the means of the Annual School health and safety questionnaire produced by the Health and Safety Department.

- xi. Ensure that there are suitable arrangements in place if bringing contractors into the University. All contractors carrying out construction work as defined in the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations must be under the control of the Estates Department:

Anyone bringing contractors into the University must ensure that there are suitable arrangements in place in order for the University to meet its health and safety responsibilities to the contractors and of course University staff. The contractors should produce a risk assessment detailing the risk to both their own staff, if appropriate, and University staff for the proposed work. This should be scrutinised by the member of School staff authorising and managing the work. The said member of School staff must also ensure the contractor has appropriate information regarding any likely risks they will be exposed to carrying out the work in the particular location.

- xii. Ensure a Multi-Occupancy Building User Group (MOBUG) is established in any building shared with other Schools/departments:

Ensure a [Multi-Occupancy Building User Group \(MOBUG\)](#) is established in any building shared with other Schools/departments. Further guidance on MOBUGs is available online.

Fire safety

In line with the above, Heads of School/Department also have the following fire safety specific responsibilities:-

- i. Appoint Fire Stewards:



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH Health & Safety Department

To ensure there are an appropriate number of [Fire Stewards](#) within the premises the School occupies - it is recommended a minimum of 2 per floor are appointed (the role of Fire Steward is voluntary). Ensure Fire Stewards have appropriate training.

ii. Appoint Fire Coordinator(s):

To ensure there is a [Fire Coordinator](#) (and a Deputy where necessary) for the building the School occupies and ensure the Fire Coordinator (and their Deputy) have appropriate training, to assist with the fire safety management.

iii. To ensure all staff have a [School Fire Safety Induction and training](#):

- i. To ensure that all new members of School staff are instructed in the action to be taken in the event of fire. This is most effectively communicated by giving each member of staff written instructions in the form of a Fire Routine Procedure.
- ii. Also, ensure that all staff receive appropriate fire safety training on induction and at regular intervals thereafter.

iv. To ensure fire safety management procedures are in place, including:

- i. safe fire evacuation procedures and assembly control,
- ii. recommendations from risk assessment reviews, applicable to area of responsibility, are carried out diligently and the action plan completed
- iii. PEEPS (see below for more information) and
- iv. [Fire Steward debriefs](#)
- v. any changes to practices or procedures within the School or building are appropriately assessed for risk of fire

v. To ensure certain fire safety checks are carried out on a regular basis and adequate records maintained:

- i. [weekly fire alarm test](#)
- ii. [weekly fire safety check](#)
- iii. [annual fire drill](#)

vi. To ensure that all fires within the School /building are reported to the Director of Health and Safety. Reports should be made using [the University's online accident and incident reporting system](#).



- vii. Ensure that adequate **records** are maintained in relation to;
 - i. Storage and use of dangerous substances - Dangerous Substance and Explosive Atmosphere Regulations (DSEAR) & Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)
 - ii. Fire Alarm maintenance (arranged by Estates Department contract)
 - iii. Emergency lighting tests (carried out by Estates Department)
 - iv. Electrical portable appliance tests
 - v. Staff fire safety training

viii. Multi Occupancy Building User Group (MOBUG):

In buildings which are occupied by different Schools and/or Management Units, the Head of School who occupies the largest floor space in the building must establish a [Multi Occupancy Building User Group \(MOBUG\)](#) to oversee fire safety, security and any other building issues in accordance with University Health and Safety Policy and appoint a Convenor for the MOBUG. Further guidance is available online.

ix. Evacuation Procedures for impaired persons:

All impaired staff and students using University buildings must be provided with a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan \(PEEP\)](#) to ensure they can be safely evacuated in the event of a fire. Head of Schools/Departments are also responsible for the implementation of internal management systems required to maintain procedures for the evacuation of impaired staff and students. Further guidance on PEEPS can be found online.

- x. Ensure that the appropriate statutory licences are applied for and renewed where necessary, e.g. HMO, Entertainment.
- xi. Ensure waste and waste storage does not compromise means of escape and is stored away from buildings and within designated containers.
- xii. Ensure the Fire Safety Unit are advised of any significant changes that may impact on fire safety matters.

Further guidance on fire safety is detailed in the [Framework: Arrangements](#) Section 4
Fire safety



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Health & Safety Department

Document version

Version number	Summary of change	Date and by whom
V1.0	New template	June 2023 HE

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact The Health and Safety Department on health.safety@ed.ac.uk or call (0131) 651 4255