

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on **27 April 2021** at 1.30pm via web ex

- PRESENT:** D Cloy (University Secretary) (Convenor); R Adams (Lay Member, Court); G Hutchison (Dean, School of Applied Science & Biological Safety Officer); A Steyven (School of Computing) until 2pm; N Reddem (ENSA); D Conner (Senior Technician, School of Applied Science); S Paterson (Unison); Mairi MacVarish (School of Health and Social Care); Damien Stantchev (EIS/FELA); Felix Jarvis - from 2.15pm (School of Computing).
- IN ATTENDANCE:** P Bennet (Interim Director of HR); S Hughes (Health & Safety Advisor); A McGoff (Director, Finance and Operations); M Masson (Governance Officer & Clerk).
- APOLOGIES:** A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor); J Dickson (Head of School Support, Business School); D Baird (Unison); C Malcolm (Project/Workshop Technician, School of Arts and Creative Industries); C Wilson (Technician, School of Engineering and Built Environment); M Taylor (EIS/FELA).

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 Members noted that Nicki Cimini and Mike Sanderson had stepped down from the Committee and that Mark Taylor would continue to represent EIS/FELA alongside new member Damien Stantchev. Rachel Younger would be a reserve member available to attend if neither Damien nor Mark could attend. The Convenor wished to record his thanks on behalf of the Committee to both Mike and Nick for their contributions over the years.
- 1.3 The Committee noted that Kerry Dewar had left the University and that Paddy Bennett was attending in his role as Interim HR Director and that Susan Groat had also left and that Andy McGoff was attending in Susan's stead.
- 1.4 The Committee noted that, going forward, Mairi MacVarish would attend for the School of Health and Social Care replacing Michelle O'Reilly.

1.5 Nikhil Reddem was attending on behalf of ENSA and apologies from Ankit Duggal were noted. Apologies were also received from Julie Dickson, Derek Baird, Colin Malcolm, Mark Taylor and Callum Wilson. Andreas Steyven left the meeting at 2pm and Felix Jarvis joined after that, on behalf of the School of Computing.

2. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2020 - HS(20/21)012**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

Item 5 – Occupational Health Service Report and Employee Assistance Programme Usage Report

3.1 The Dean of the School of Applied Science confirmed that staff in Engage and the School of Applied Science had developed and published short exercise videos.

4. **HEALTH & SAFETY COVID-19 – CAMPUS LIFE - HS(20/21)013**

4.1 The Health and Safety Adviser introduced the paper and highlighted the actions that had been taken and current considerations to ensure the health and safety of the University community and compliance with legislation and guidance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.2 The Convener added that planning for the next academic year against a backdrop of expected relaxation of restrictions was underway and that Universities were working on a planning assumption of 1 metre distancing with contingency at 2 metres, pending confirmation of the distancing requirements for the next academic year by the Scottish Government. In terms of asymptomatic testing, the Committee noted that staff and students were currently able to access lateral flow tests either through the testing centre set up in partnership with the University of Edinburgh or via the other routes more generally available. Consideration was also being given to students' access to vaccines and some of the challenges that existed for example in students arriving from overseas or in students being between GP practices over the summer if they were away from their term time address.

4.3 A question was asked about whether there were sufficient resources available to the Health and Safety Department given the continuing demands on the Department both for Covid and other Health and Safety business as usual priorities. The Convener explained that the Department had received support from an

external Health & Safety specialist and that a staff member from the School of Applied Sciences was providing further support on a short-term basis. The Director of Finance added that there was additional Health & Safety consultancy engaged within Property and Facilities to support their ongoing H&S requirements and that H&S staff continued to work in partnership with the Property and Facilities team in work to re-purpose the campuses for example. The Committee noted that the role of Head of Health and Safety was currently being recruited to and that an early task of that new appointee would be to review current Health & Safety support arrangements across the University and make recommendations as appropriate.

4.4 The Committee noted the report.

5. Occupational Health Service Report - HS(20/21)0014

5.1 The Interim Director of Human Resources introduced the report. The Committee noted that Optima Health continued to act as the University's Occupational health service provider and further noted the number of referrals in the period.

5.2 The Committee noted that utilisation of the Employee Assistance Programme remained low, that HR was reviewing how best to publicise the service and that mental health was the main reason for staff absence at the present time. Several initiatives were in train arising from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan launched last year and a workload toolkit had recently been launched to provide guidance to staff on managing workloads

5.3 The Committee noted that absence rates continued to fall and that some recent absences cited vaccination reaction as a cause for absence and a small incidence of long Covid. In response to a question about patterns of absence, the Interim Director confirmed and that there were no discernible absence patterns from particular Schools or Service areas.

5.4 The Committee noted the report.

6. Health and Safety Annual Report - HS(20/21)015

6.1 The Health and Safety Adviser provided an overview of key headings in the Health and Safety Annual Report which covered the period March 2020 to February 2021. The Committee noted that the annual report had been prepared against the backdrop of Covid-19 and that the year had been challenging for staff and students who had faced unprecedented challenges.

- 6.2 The accident statistics and lessons learned arising from specific incidents were noted and the Committee further noted that, going forward, near misses would be recorded in line with Health and Safety Executive guidance. In addition, an online approach to reporting accidents at home had been introduced.
- 6.3 A query was raised about how Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) was managed in the context of home working. The Committee noted that PAT for PCs was only required every five years and that further work was ongoing with colleagues in Property and Facilities to review PAT in student accommodation.
- 6.4 In terms of planning for next academic year, the Committee noted that other factors (e.g. ventilation) in addition to social distancing were relevant to room utilisation in particular for areas such as research laboratories whose use was more fluid.
- 6.5 The Committee welcomed the report and the comprehensive account of health and safety business and the Convener thanked the Health and Safety Team for preparing it. The Committee noted the report and that a summary would be prepared for the University Court.

Action: Health and Safety Adviser

7. Hazardous Substances Policy – HS(02/21)016

- 7.1 The Health and Safety Adviser introduced the Policy which had been developed by David Conner from the School of Applied Sciences.
- 7.2 The policy set out the approach to managing hazardous substances through purchase to disposal lifecycle. The Committee welcomed the policy and the clarity it brought. The Committee noted that procurement colleagues were aware of the policy and now held a managed staff list for those permitted to purchase hazardous substances. It was agreed the further information and guidance on training and hazardous waste disposal in support of the new policy would be added.
- 7.3 The Dean of the School of Applied Sciences commented that the policy appeared to be a good fit with potential changes to the regulatory environment that may be coming soon.
- 7.4 The Committee approved the Hazardous Substances Policy.

8. Online Training Update

8.1 The Committee noted the verbal update on training statistics provided by the Health and Safety Adviser.

9. Accident Statistics September 2020 to February 2021 - HS(20/21)017

9.1 The Committee noted the paper which provided a summary and analysis of accidents that had been reported for the period 1 September 2020 to 28 February 2021 along with details of serious accidents involving students, staff, contractors/visitors, hazardous and fire incidents.

9.2 The Committee noted there were 2 RIDDOR accidents and that there were no serious accidents to students during the reporting period.

9.3 The Committee further noted that one near miss/dangerous occurrence at Merchiston had resulted in full structural survey being undertaken but that it had concluded that the near miss had been an isolated incident.

9.4 The Committee noted the Accident Statistics Report.

10. Emergency Evacuation Reports - HS(20/21)018

10.1 The Health and Safety Adviser provided an update on the emergency evacuation reports and the Committee noted the report.

11. Health & Safety Notices Summary September 2020 to February 2021 - HS(20/21)019

11.1 The Committee noted that one Health and Safety notice had been issued for the period and that action had been taken quickly to rectify the issue.

12. Overseas Travel Risk Assessment Project

12.1 The Clerk provided a verbal update on the overseas travel risk assessment project. The Committee noted that the project involved two parts firstly a new risk assessment form for overseas travel replacing the existing form with an approval workflow involving Deans/Heads of Service or their approved delegates and, secondly, an approach to safeguarding staff and students on overseas business via a managed service provided by Gardaworld/Crisis24. The Committee further noted that a

refreshed policy framework/procedures and guidance notes would be developed to support staff and students.

12.2 The Committee noted that there was currently very little overseas travel. The levels system for overseas travel expected to be clarified by Government soon would be relevant when planning overseas trips. The cost associated with any testing/quarantining required would be considered as part assessment of the cost of trip and approval for travel separate to the risk assessment process. The workflow for risk assessment did, however, allow for a re-evaluation of risks associated with a trip if conditions changed in a particular location. Pre-travel alerts from Guardaworld/Crisis24 would flag the risk status to travellers prior to their trip.

12.3 The Committee noted the update.

13. **Date of Next Meeting** To be confirmed.