

School of Natural & Computing Sciences

Health and Safety Policy for Office and non-Chemistry Laboratory Based Operations

Introduction

Health and Safety is a fundamental priority for the School of Natural and Computing Sciences. The School is committed to preventing injury, ill health, and harm to staff, students, visitors, and members of the wider community arising from its activities. The School is therefore committed to implementing proportionate control measures that are appropriate to the level of risk and that support safe working without imposing unnecessary burden.

This document sets out the arrangements in place within the School to manage health and safety risks associated with office-based and non-chemistry laboratory activities. It defines responsibilities, outlines key procedures, and provides guidance on expected standards of behaviour.

Health and safety legislation places duties on the University, the School, and on individual staff and students. All members of the School community are required to understand and fulfil their responsibilities and to cooperate fully with the systems and procedures described in this document.

The School recognises that health and safety arrangements require continual monitoring and improvement. Staff and students are encouraged to raise concerns or suggestions for improvement with [Brian Paterson](#), Technical Resources Officer (TRO) and Local Safety Coordinator (LSC).

This policy will be formally reviewed at least once every 12 months to ensure that it remains effective, current, and compliant with legal and University requirements.

Professor David M^cGloin
Head of School

September 2026

Health and Safety Information

This document provides key health and safety information relevant to staff and students within the School of Natural and Computing Sciences. It forms part of the School's arrangements for managing health and safety and supports compliance with University policies and statutory requirements.

The content of this document will be formally reviewed at least once every 12 months.

Where changes are required, an updated version will be issued to ensure that information remains accurate, current, and effective.

Additional health and safety information, guidance, and updates may be circulated to members of the School as necessary and may also be displayed on health and safety notice boards located throughout buildings occupied by the School.

All staff and students are expected to familiarise themselves with the information provided and to comply with the requirements set out in this document and related University policies.

Health and Safety Organisation in the School

The Head of School has overall responsibility for health and safety within the School of Natural and Computing Sciences.

Responsibilities of the Head of School

The Head of School will:

- Establish and maintain an effective Health and Safety Policy for the School.
- Ensure that adequate resources are provided to enable the effective implementation of the Policy.
- Commission regular inspections of the School to monitor compliance with health and safety arrangements.
- Commission reviews, at least annually, to assess the effectiveness of the Policy and associated arrangements.
- Chair the School Health and Safety Committee.

Management and Line Responsibilities

Within the School, and throughout the University, Individuals have a responsibility for their own health and safety and the health and safety of others, but Line Managers also have a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of those under their line management

Staff with management or supervisory responsibilities must ensure that:

- Risks associated with activities under their control are identified and appropriately managed.
- Staff and students are made aware of hazards associated with their work and understand the control measures in place.
- Appropriate training, instruction, and supervision are provided.
- Safe systems of work are implemented and monitored.

Risk Assessment

All academic, technical, and administrative staff are required to ensure that they, and those they supervise or manage, work in a safe environment and adopt safe working practices. This includes carrying out risk assessments appropriate to the activities undertaken.

Risk assessments may be informal or formally documented, depending on the nature and level of risk. Where significant risk is identified, the assessment must be recorded in writing in accordance with legal requirements.

Risk assessment is a systematic process used to identify hazards, evaluate risks, and determine appropriate control measures to reduce risk to an acceptable level. Completing a risk assessment is not an administrative exercise; it is an essential part of ensuring that work can be carried out safely.

The School is legally required to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken and that the significant findings—namely the control measures required to manage identified risks—are recorded and implemented. All staff and students are required to comply with the outcomes of relevant risk assessments.

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment focuses on significant hazards, disregards trivial issues, and records control measures clearly so that those involved can carry out their work safely.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the precautions identified through risk assessments are implemented in areas under their control. Where activities present hazards not covered by this document, supervisors must ensure that additional risk assessments are completed and appropriate control measures put in place.

(See Appendix A for the School Risk Assessment form.)

School Safety Coordinator

The School Safety Coordinator provides specialist advice and guidance on health and safety matters within the School of Natural and Computing Sciences.

[Brian Paterson](#), Technical Resources Officer, is the appointed School Safety Coordinator.

The School Safety Coordinator's primary responsibilities are to:

- Provide competent advice to staff and students on health and safety matters.
- Support the development, implementation, and ongoing review of the School's health and safety arrangements.
- Act as a point of contact between the School and central University health and safety services.
- Assist with the dissemination of health and safety information, guidance, and best practice.
- Support the investigation of accidents, incidents, and near misses where required.

Any member of staff or student who has a health and safety concern which they are unable to resolve locally should contact the School Safety Coordinator without delay.

In the absence of the School Safety Coordinator, staff and students should follow the instructions provided in the out-of-office email. Where necessary, matters may be escalated to the University's Director of Health, Safety and Resilience, [Mr Mike Houston](#).

Discussion of Health and Safety Matters

Health and safety matters within the School of Natural and Computing Sciences will be discussed and addressed as required to ensure the effective management of risk and compliance with University policies and legal obligations.

The School has a Health and Safety Committee, which will meet at least twice each academic year. The Committee provides a forum for the discussion of health and safety performance, incidents, risk management, and the implementation of policy and procedural improvements.

In addition, health and safety is a standing agenda item at Discipline staff meetings, ensuring that matters arising at local level can be raised, considered, and addressed promptly.

Any member of staff or student who has a health and safety matter they believe warrants discussion or review is encouraged to bring it to the attention of the School Safety Coordinator, who will determine the appropriate route for consideration.

Responsibilities of all staff and students

Legislation places duties on the University and the School to ensure the health and safety of staff, students, and others who may be affected by their activities. In addition, all individuals have personal responsibilities for health and safety.

All staff and students must:

- Cooperate with, and comply with, the health and safety policies, procedures, and arrangements implemented by the University and the School.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Conduct their activities in a manner that does not create unacceptable risk to themselves or others.
- Report hazards, unsafe conditions, accidents, incidents, and near misses promptly, or take appropriate immediate action to make the situation safe where it is safe to do so.
- Use equipment, facilities, and safety controls provided for health and safety purposes correctly and in accordance with any training or instructions given.
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with, misuse, or disable any item provided in the interests of health and safety.

Failure to comply with health and safety requirements may result in disciplinary action in accordance with University procedures.

Fire Safety

Fire represents one of the most significant risks to life, property, and continuity of operations within the School. Effective fire prevention, preparedness, and response are therefore essential. All staff and students must comply with the fire safety arrangements set out in this document and with University fire safety procedures.

Fire prevention

The prevention of fire is a priority. All staff and students must ensure that the following precautions are observed:

- Avoid the accumulation of combustible materials such as wastepaper, cardboard, and plastics.
- Ensure that ventilation openings on electrical equipment are not obstructed and that materials are not placed close to electrical heaters.
- Ensure personal electrical equipment has been PAT tested.
- Do not use fan heaters.
- Do not store or charge electric cycle/scooters inside the buildings.
- Do not overload electrical sockets or use unauthorised (non-UK standard) extension leads or adapters.

On discovering a fire

Any person who discovers a fire must take the following actions immediately and **in the order listed**, provided it is safe to do so:

1. Activate the fire alarm. No fire is considered too small to warrant sounding the alarm.
2. Arrange for the Fire and Rescue Service to be called by dialling **999**.
3. Warn occupants in the immediate area and in adjacent rooms to ensure that they are aware of the fire.
4. Only if trained and without placing themselves at risk, attempt to extinguish the fire using an appropriate fire extinguisher.
5. If the fire cannot be safely tackled, close the door to the affected area to contain the fire, evacuate the building, and await the arrival of the Fire and Rescue Service.

On reaching the assembly point indicated on fire notices, individuals must report to the person in charge and provide relevant information about the incident.

On hearing the fire alarm

On hearing the fire alarm, all occupants must act immediately as follows:

- Don a yellow jacket for the zone if you are first to reach one and check the zone shown on the plan with the jacket.
- Check nearby rooms, where it is safe to do so, to ensure occupants have heard the alarm and have evacuated.
- If a person requires evacuation assistance (Evac Chair) then send someone to inform the Fire Marshal (identified by a red high-visibility jacket), who will arrange for trained staff to attend.

DO NOT LEAVE SOMEONE WHO REQUIRES ASSISTANCE ALONE – TAKE THEM TO THE TOP STAIRWELL AND WAIT FOR ASSISTANCE.

- Leave the building by the nearest available exit and proceed directly to the designated assembly point.

- Staff teaching or supervising students must ensure that all students evacuate promptly.
- Any information indicating that persons may still be inside the building must be reported to the Fire Marshal (identified by a red high-visibility jacket).

Re-entry to the building is strictly prohibited until authorised. Individuals must also take reasonable steps to prevent others from re-entering prematurely. If you have donned a yellow zone jacket, then return it to the station immediately re-entry has been authorised.

Extinguishers

All staff, students, visitors, and postgraduate researchers are required to familiarise themselves with the location of fire extinguishers and the instructions for their use. The University uses four principal types of fire extinguisher: water, foam, carbon dioxide, and dry powder. Each is suitable for specific classes of fire.

	Water	Foam	Carbon Dioxide	Dry Powder
Wood, paper textiles etc.	✓	✓		✓
Petrol, oil, fats, paints etc.		✓	✓	✓
Electrical hazards			✓	✓

Water extinguishers must **never** be used on fires involving flammable liquids or electrical equipment.

All fire extinguishers are inspected at least annually by a competent person, and the date of the most recent inspection is displayed on each extinguisher.

Escape routes

Escape routes, corridors, and stairways must be kept clear at all times. Combustible materials must not be stored in these areas, and furniture or other items must not be positioned such that they restrict the width of escape routes.

Fire doors are a critical control measure designed to prevent the spread of smoke and fire and to facilitate safe evacuation. Fire doors must therefore be kept closed and must not be wedged or propped open.

Fire drills and alarm tests

Fire evacuation drills are conducted at least twice annually to test the effectiveness of evacuation procedures and to ensure familiarity with emergency arrangements.

Fire alarm testing is carried out weekly as follows:

- **Fraser Noble Building:** Wednesdays at 10:00
- **Meston Building:** Wednesdays at 07:30

Further information on fire safety arrangements, including evacuation procedures, is available on the [School Safety Webpage](#).

Electrical Safety

Electrical hazards present a significant risk of serious injury or fatality and may also result in fire or damage to property. All staff and students must ensure that electrical safety arrangements are complied with at all times.

Electrical Equipment Safety

All portable electrical equipment used within the School must be maintained in a safe condition. Equipment will be subject to regular inspection and testing by a competent person. The inspection programme and any associated training will be coordinated by the Technical Resources Officer (TRO).

Any member of staff or student who believes that electrical equipment is damaged, defective, or unsafe must take the following actions immediately:

- Isolate the equipment by unplugging it from the power supply.
- Prevent further use of the equipment (for example, by attaching a warning label or removing the plug).
- Report the issue to the TRO, who will arrange inspection, repair, or replacement by a competent person.

Individuals must routinely check the condition of any electrical equipment they use.

Defects such as cracked plugs, frayed cables, loose connections, or damaged insulation must be reported without delay.

Repairs to electrical equipment may only be carried out by a competent person. Under no circumstances must unauthorised repairs be attempted.

Use of Personal and New Equipment

Electrical equipment must not be used in the School unless it has been inspected and approved by a competent person. This requirement applies in particular to personal electrical items brought from home, such as kettles, radios and mobile device charging units.

New electrical equipment may be used without prior inspection only where it is supplied new and undamaged. All other equipment must be inspected before use.

Staff requiring inspection or training related to electrical equipment must contact the TRO to make appropriate arrangements.

Extension Leads and Adaptors

The use of unsafe electrical configurations is strictly prohibited.

- Daisy-chaining of extension leads is not permitted.
- Block adaptors are prohibited, as they may cause electrical overloading or overheating.
- Only one extension lead may be connected to a wall socket.
- Cables must not trail across walkways or create trip hazards.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in removal of equipment and further action in accordance with University procedures.

Examples of correct and incorrect arrangements.

Correct: • Only one extension is plugged into a socket outlet.	 A photograph showing a single white extension cord plugged into a wall socket. The cord is neatly coiled on a dark carpet. A green checkmark icon is in the top right corner of the image.
Incorrect: • One extension is plugged into another. • Daisy chaining is prohibited by the University.	 A photograph showing two white extension cords. One is plugged into a wall socket, and the other is plugged into the first extension cord. A red 'X' icon is in the top right corner of the image.
Incorrect: • One extension is plugged into another and trailing across the floor. • Daisy chaining is prohibited by the University. Pathways should be kept clear of trip hazards.	 A photograph showing two white extension cords plugged into each other. They are lying flat on a dark carpet. A red 'X' icon is in the top right corner of the image.
Incorrect: • Block adapters are prohibited by the University as they can introduce overloading or overheating.	 A photograph of a white block adapter, which is a cube-shaped device with multiple ports. A red 'X' icon is in the bottom left corner of the image.

Housekeeping

Good standards of housekeeping are essential to maintaining a safe working environment and reducing the risk of injury, fire, and ill health. All staff and students are required to ensure that workspaces and shared areas are maintained in a clean, orderly, and safe condition.

In particular, all staff and students must ensure that:

- Passageways, work areas, and access routes are kept clear at all times to allow safe movement and to ensure unrestricted access to fire exits in the event of an emergency.
- Items are not left where they may cause trips, collision injuries, or obstruction of escape routes.
- Cupboards, filing cabinets, and drawers are kept closed when not in use to prevent impact injuries.
- Electrical cables and leads are not allowed to trail across walkways or areas where people may walk. Where there is no reasonably practicable alternative, suitable cable protection must be used to eliminate trip hazards.
- Waste materials are disposed of promptly using appropriate waste containers and not allowed to accumulate. Accumulations of combustible waste present an increased fire risk.
- Food and drink preparation areas are kept clean and hygienic to prevent health risks and maintain acceptable standards of cleanliness.

Any spillages must be dealt with immediately. If an individual becomes aware of a spill created by another person, they must ensure that appropriate steps are taken without delay to clean the area or to prevent access until the hazard has been removed.

Failure to maintain acceptable standards of housekeeping may result in increased risk to health and safety and will be addressed in accordance with School and University procedures.

If you notice an area where clutter is occurring, please report this to the TRO.

Building Maintenance

The Estates Section is responsible for the maintenance of the fabric of University buildings, including fixtures and fittings. Buildings are subject to regular inspection by Estates staff to ensure that they remain safe and fit for purpose.

However, staff and students who work within a building are often best placed to identify emerging defects or unsafe conditions. All staff and students therefore have a duty to remain vigilant and to report any building-related issues that may present a risk to health and safety.

Any defects, damage, or maintenance issues should be reported promptly to the Technical Resources Officer (TRO), who will liaise with the Estates Section to arrange appropriate remedial action.

Matters requiring urgent attention must be reported immediately to the Estates emergency service by contacting **Extension 3939**, which operates 24 hours per day.

Non-urgent maintenance issues may be reported by staff using the [University's online Estates fault reporting system](#).

Access to Heights

Falls from height present a significant risk of serious injury. Incidents may occur as a result of individuals using unsuitable means of access, most commonly chairs, to reach items stored above head height.

Only appropriate access equipment must be used when accessing storage or working above head height. Suitable equipment includes step ladders or kick stools that are specifically designed and maintained for this purpose.

Where reasonably practicable, items should not be stored above head height. Where high-level storage is unavoidable:

- Heavy or awkward items must not be stored above head height.
- Frequently used items should be stored at waist height or lower to minimise the need for overhead access.
- Items must be stored securely to prevent them from falling.

Staff who require regular access to storage above head height and do not have appropriate equipment must contact the School Office to request the provision of a suitable kick stool or alternative access equipment.

Failure to follow these requirements may result in increased risk of injury and will be addressed in accordance with School and University health and safety procedures.

Manual Handling

Manual handling activities present a significant risk of injury, particularly to the musculoskeletal system. Even within office-based environments, injuries resulting from poor manual handling practices—most commonly to the lower back—remain a frequent cause of work-related ill health and lost time incidents.

Manual handling injuries are not limited to the back. Cuts, bruising, crush injuries to hands or feet, and other preventable injuries may occur where loads are moved incorrectly or without appropriate precautions.

All staff and students are required to assess manual handling tasks before undertaking them. Individuals must:

- Consider the size, shape, weight, and stability of the load.
- Assess whether the task can be avoided or carried out using mechanical aids, such as trolleys or other handling equipment.
- Seek assistance when loads are heavy, awkward, or difficult to manoeuvre.
- Ensure that the route over which a load is to be moved is clear and free from hazards.

Individuals must not attempt to lift or carry items if there is any doubt about their ability to do so safely. Where uncertainty exists, the task must be discussed with an immediate supervisor so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Staff with supervisory or managerial responsibilities must ensure that individuals under their control are not expected to undertake manual handling tasks that are likely to result in injury. Where manual handling cannot be avoided, supervisors must ensure that appropriate information, instruction, or training is provided and that safe systems of work are followed.

Failure to adhere to safe manual handling practices may result in injury and will be addressed in accordance with School and University health and safety procedures.

Computer Workstations

The use of computer workstations for prolonged periods may expose staff to a range of health risks, most commonly musculoskeletal disorders affecting the upper limbs, neck, shoulders, and back. These conditions are collectively referred to as work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs).

The risk of developing such conditions is greatest for individuals who use display screen equipment (DSE) intensively for a significant proportion of their working day. These risks can be effectively controlled through the application of ergonomic principles to the design and layout of workstations, the selection of equipment, and the organisation of work tasks. All staff who use display screen equipment as part of their normal work are required to complete the [University's online workstation training and self-assessment](#) in the first instance. This assessment will be automatically reassigned every three years.

Additional self-assessments must be completed where:

- A workstation or location of work is changed.
- New equipment is introduced.
- An individual experiences discomfort, pain, or other health concerns that may be associated with workstation use.

The assessment system will automatically identify cases requiring further action and will refer these to trained assessors for in-person assessment where necessary.

Staff are required to implement any control measures identified through workstation assessments and to follow guidance provided to reduce the risk of injury. Supervisors must ensure that staff under their control are aware of these requirements and are supported in maintaining safe workstation practices.

Failure to address identified workstation risks may result in avoidable injury and will be managed in accordance with School and University health and safety procedures.

Stairs

The use of stairs presents a risk of slips, trips, and falls, which may result in serious injury. All staff and students must take appropriate care when using stairways within University buildings.

When using stairs, individuals must:

- Use handrails where provided.
- Take particular care when stairs are wet, obstructed, or heavily used.
- Avoid running, carrying items that obstruct vision, or engaging in behaviour that may increase the risk of falling.

All stairways must be kept clear of obstructions at all times. Any defects, hazards, or obstructions, including damaged steps, loose handrails, inadequate lighting, or spillages, must be reported immediately to the Technical Resources Officer (TRO) or, where urgent, directly to Estates.

Prompt reporting of hazards is essential to ensure that appropriate remedial action can be taken and to minimise the risk of injury to building occupants.

Chemicals

There are no chemicals used routinely within office-based operations of the School that require specialist handling precautions. However, limited exposure to chemical substances may occur indirectly, and awareness of associated risks remains important.

Photocopiers and multi-function devices (MFDs) may generate small quantities of hazardous gases during operation. These devices are located in suitably ventilated areas and, when used as intended, do not present a significant risk to health. Users must not interfere with ventilation systems or attempt to relocate such equipment without appropriate approval.

Cleaning staff employed within University buildings may use specialised cleaning chemicals and equipment as part of their duties. These substances and items of equipment are intended for use **only** by trained cleaning personnel. Staff and students must not use, handle, or interfere with cleaning chemicals or cleaning equipment under any circumstances.

Any concerns relating to chemical exposure, equipment operation, or environmental conditions should be reported promptly to the Technical Resources Officer (TRO) for assessment and, where necessary, further action.

Out-of-Hours Working

Out-of-hours working is defined as access to University buildings outside of normal operating hours. Appropriate controls are in place to ensure the safety and security of staff and students during these periods.

A swipe-card access system operates for out-of-hours entry to the Meston Building. All staff and PhD students may request access using their University identification card by submitting an access request via the [NCS Team](#) for Computing Science, Maths or Physics or [Chemistry Team](#) sites. Access requests must be authorised in advance.

All individuals undertaking out-of-hours working are strongly encouraged to install and configure the University's SafeZone application. SafeZone enables users to raise an alert and request assistance in the event of an emergency and provides an additional level of support during non-standard working hours. Staff can find details [here](#), students [here](#).

Where undergraduate students are required to access the building after 19:00, the relevant Head of Discipline must be informed in advance and the information passed on to [Ms Julie Timms](#) or [Mrs Lynn Harrison](#).

There are two designated out-of-hours entrances to the Meston Building:

- **North entrance:** Accessible in the evenings via the entrance adjacent to the Meston 1 corridor (Petrophysics laboratory corridor) beside the Library.
- **South entrance:** The main entrance on Meston Walk.

Individuals may be required to sign in when working out of hours. Those engaged in chemistry laboratory work must sign in at the south entrance for all out-of-hours activity and must comply with the additional requirements set out in the [Chemistry Safety Handbook](#).

Any issues relating to swipe card access should be reported promptly to the TRO or via the [University Service Desk](#).

There is no need to sign in to the Fraser Noble building as the swipe entry system there both controls and maintains records which can be interrogated.

Individuals should be aware that the use of lifts during out-of-hours periods may result in extended waiting times for assistance in the event of a breakdown. Careful consideration should therefore be given before using lifts during these periods.

All staff and students undertaking out-of-hours work must also give due consideration to the [University Lone Working policy](#) and associated guidance.

New Staff

All staff who are new to the School of Natural and Computing Sciences must receive appropriate health and safety information, instruction, and training relevant to their role and working environment.

Health and safety induction training should normally be provided during the initial period of employment, with essential information given on the first day where reasonably practicable. Additional training may be delivered over the first few days or weeks in post, depending on the nature of the role and associated risks.

An individual's immediate supervisor is responsible for ensuring that:

- New staff receive appropriate health and safety induction and training.
- Any role-specific risks are explained and appropriate control measures are in place.
- Required training is completed promptly and recorded where necessary.

New staff are required to familiarise themselves with the School's health and safety arrangements, comply with all relevant procedures, and seek clarification where any aspect of health and safety guidance is unclear.

First Aid

Appropriate first aid arrangements are in place to ensure that timely assistance can be provided in the event of injury or sudden illness within the School.

First aid notices are displayed prominently throughout the buildings and provide information on how to obtain first aid assistance.

First aid boxes containing basic supplies are provided at suitable locations within the buildings, including coverage of the Meston Walk end of the building. In addition, dedicated First Aid rooms are available at the following locations:

- **Meston Building:** Room O37
- **Fraser Noble Building:** Room O68

All staff and students must familiarise themselves with the location of first aid facilities relevant to their usual place of work or study.

Any issues relating to the availability or condition of first aid equipment or facilities should be reported promptly to the Technical Resources Officer (TRO) so that appropriate action can be taken.

Accidents and Near Misses

All accidents and near-miss incidents must be reported promptly to ensure that appropriate action can be taken to prevent recurrence and to meet statutory reporting requirements. Staff and students must report accidents as soon as possible to their immediate supervisor. The following events must be reported:

- Any accident in which an individual sustains an injury, regardless of how minor the injury may appear at the time and irrespective of whether medical treatment is required.
- Any incident in which an individual could reasonably have been injured but where injury was avoided, including incidents commonly referred to as near-misses.

The primary purpose of reporting accidents and near-misses is to enable the School and the University to investigate the circumstances and implement measures to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future. Reporting may also be required to meet legal obligations to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and to the University's insurers.

A [University accident report form](#) must be completed for all accidents and near misses. The form must be completed and submitted by:

- The immediate supervisor of the injured person; or
- The individual in charge of the area where the incident occurred.

Under no circumstances must the accident report form be completed by the injured person. Completed report forms must be submitted within **48 hours** of the incident. Serious accidents must be reported immediately to the University Safety Advisers by telephone (Emily Blake ext.4786 or Allan Petrie ext.3896) or via the online reporting system. As a general guide, an incident should be regarded as serious if the injured person has attended hospital as a result of the accident.

Reporting must not be delayed in order to gather additional information. Any further details may be provided subsequently through the Local Safety Coordinator, the University Health and Safety Advisers, or by updating the original online report.

The University Safety Advisers are responsible for ensuring that incidents requiring statutory reporting are notified to the Health and Safety Executive in accordance with legal requirements.

The Local Safety Coordinator must be informed of all accidents and near misses as soon as reasonably practicable and may assist with incident investigation where required.

Inspections

Health and safety inspections are undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's health and safety arrangements and to confirm that procedures are being implemented as intended.

Formal laboratory safety inspections will be carried out at least once each year. Inspections will be conducted by a team led by the Technical Resources Officer (TRO) and may include other staff with relevant responsibilities or expertise.

The purpose of inspections is to:

- Identify hazards and unsafe conditions.
- Assess compliance with School and University health and safety policies and procedures.
- Review the effectiveness of existing control measures.
- Identify opportunities for improvement in health and safety management.

Findings from inspections will be documented and reported to the Head of School, together with any recommendations for corrective or preventative action and associated timescales. Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that actions arising from inspections are addressed promptly and that agreed control measures are implemented within the specified timescales.

Inspection outcomes form part of the School's continuous approach to monitoring and improving health and safety performance.

Waste

Under normal circumstances, waste generated through office-based operations within the School does not present a hazard. However, there may be occasions where materials or items could present a risk to those responsible for handling, transporting, or disposing of waste.

All staff and students must ensure that waste is managed in a safe and appropriate manner and in accordance with University waste management procedures.

The following requirements apply:

- Waste must be disposed of promptly and using the appropriate waste stream.
- Potentially hazardous items, including but not limited to chemicals, sharp objects, or contaminated materials, must **not** be placed in general waste bins.
- Any item or material that may present a risk during disposal must be assessed and managed appropriately before disposal.

Where there is uncertainty regarding the correct disposal route for any waste, or where waste may present a hazard, advice must be sought from the Technical Resources Officer (TRO) before disposal.

Failure to dispose of waste correctly may create risks to health and safety and may result in harm to staff, contractors, or members of the public. Non-compliance with waste management requirements will be addressed in accordance with School and University procedures.

(See Appendix B for detailed waste disposal procedures.)

Insurance

When travelling, please ensure you have completed an [insurance form](#) as this will provide you with full cover.

Driving on University Business

The University Health and Safety Committee has published [Guidance on Driving on University Business](#).

Stress

The University is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment for all staff and recognises that excessive levels of work-related stress are a potential cause of ill-health.

In the first instance a member of staff who feels they may be suffering from stress should speak to either:

- Head of School/Section
- [Human Resources Officer](#)
- [Occupational Health Service](#)
- GP
- [Counselling Service](#)
- [Mental Health First Aider](#)
- [Trade Union Representative](#)

The University has a duty in law to ensure that the health of its employees is not adversely affected by their work. This [policy](#) and [associated guidance](#) set out what the University does to manage work-related stress.

Security

All staff and students have a responsibility to ensure the security of themselves, their colleagues and belongings.

- Do not enter laboratory areas without permission and without appropriate PPE.
- Lock offices, even if only leaving for a short period.
- Look out for tailgating (letting others into secure areas including the whole building when working out-of-hours). Ensure doors to secure areas close behind you and do not let anyone follow you without using their own access card.
- Ensure when wearing headphones that you can hear alarms or other people calling to you for evacuation purposes.

APPENDIX A



Risk Assessment form for incidental risks at: - *Name of School or Department Here*

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done

WASTE DISPOSAL

All waste generated within the School must be managed in a manner that prevents harm to staff, students, contractors, and members of the public and complies with University policy and legal requirements.

Waste must be segregated at the point of generation into appropriate waste streams and disposed of in accordance with the procedures set out below. No waste may be disposed of unless its nature is known and the correct disposal route has been identified.

General Principles

All staff and students must ensure that:

- Waste is disposed of promptly and using the correct waste stream.
- Waste containers are clearly labelled and used only for the waste types for which they are intended.
- Hazardous waste is never placed in general or domestic waste streams.
- Waste is not allowed to accumulate unnecessarily.
- Advice is sought from the Technical Resources Officer (TRO) where there is any uncertainty regarding disposal requirements.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that waste generated under their control is managed safely and disposed of appropriately.

A. Solid Waste Streams

Laboratory Waste (Chemical Contaminated Materials)

Includes contaminated gloves, laboratory plastics, and similar materials.

- Waste must be placed in yellow bags.
- Bags must be sealed and disposed of in the designated yellow bins located in the Meston quad cage.
- Access keys are held in the Chemistry Store.

Responsibility: Supervisors, Laboratory Coordinators, or Technician-in-Charge.

Sharps and Contaminated Sharps

Includes needles, syringes, scalpel blades, and other sharp items.

- Waste must be placed in approved sharps containers (yellow with red lids).
- Containers must be sealed once full and must not be reopened.
- Full containers must be taken to the Chemistry Store, where disposal will be arranged.

Biohazardous Waste

Includes bacterial plates, tissue culture materials, contaminated plastics, and plant material.

- Waste must be autoclaved before disposal.
- Autoclaved waste must be placed in **orange bags** and disposed of in designated **yellow bins**.
- Disposal is arranged through the Environment Office.

Asbestos

Can only be uplifted by specialist companies, contact TRO in first instance.

Radioactive waste (STRICTLY CONTROLLED)

- Radioactive waste must be kept in designated radiation-controlled areas.
- Disposal requires specialist procedures.
- The Local Safety Coordinator must be contacted in the first instance.
- Advice is provided to the University by NHS Grampian Radiation Protection Services.

University radiation protection adviser - Dr. S. McCallum, s.mccallum@abdn.ac.uk

Geosciences local radiation supervisor- Dr. S. Bowden, s.a.bowden@abdn.ac.uk

Chemistry local radiation supervisor - Prof. A. McLaughlin, a.c.mclaughlin@abdn.ac.uk

Broken and Uncontaminated Glass

Includes broken laboratory glassware and uncontaminated glass Pasteur pipettes.

- Glass must be placed in puncture-proof containers.
- Full containers must be sealed, labelled, and disposed of in designated red bins.

Equipment and Metal Waste

- Electrical equipment must be disposed of through the University's WEEE process.
- Equipment must be certified as decontaminated before disposal, with all hazard labels removed.
- Metals must not be placed in bags. A designated metal waste skip is located behind Fraser Noble.
- Advice must be sought from the TRO prior to disposal.
- Computers and peripherals - disposal arranged through [IT services](#).

Domestic and Inert Waste

Includes non-hazardous waste such as paper towels and general refuse.

- Waste must be disposed of in black bags.
- Collection and disposal are managed by cleaning staff.

Recycling

Recycling Waste Streams

Recycling facilities must be used where provided.

- Confidential Waste: Paper documents must be placed in SHRED-IT consoles. Large volumes must be disposed of using official SHRED-IT bags obtained from the Environment Office.
- Recyclables: Cans, plastics, and glass bottles must be placed in green recycling bins located throughout the buildings.
- Cardboard: Must be flattened, stripped of plastic or polystyrene, and disposed of in designated recycling locations as specified for each building.

Cardboard – MESTON

Remove all plastic and polystyrene (this is deemed general waste and should be disposed of in normal bins), flatten and dispose in green bins located in the quad area.

– ST MARYS

Remove all plastic and polystyrene (this is deemed general waste and should be disposed of in normal bins), flatten and take to cage in yellow basement corridor.

– FRASER NOBLE

Remove all plastic and polystyrene (this is deemed general waste and should be disposed of in normal bins), flatten and take to cage in corridor.

B. Liquid waste

Solvent and Chemical Waste

- Solvent waste must be stored in clearly labelled, compatible containers.
- Each container must list all constituent solvents.
- Chlorinated and non-chlorinated solvents must never be mixed.
- Containers must not be tightly stoppered.
- Full containers must be transferred promptly to the Waste Solvent Store.

Where disposal down drains is permitted, this must be explicitly confirmed in the relevant material safety data sheet (MSDS) and must be carried out using copious quantities of water.

Autoclaves

Where autoclaves are used to treat biological waste, staff must ensure that:

- Loads are subjected to the required temperature for the required duration.
- Appropriate verification methods (e.g. probe monitoring or indicator strips) are used.
- Records are maintained where required.

Autoclave tape alone does not confirm effective sterilisation and must not be relied upon as sole evidence.

Any questions can be directed to the Local Safety Coordinators:

Chemistry: [Dr Rainer Ebel](#)

Computing Science, Mathematics, Physics and Geosciences: [Brian Paterson](#)

Engineering: [Grant Cordiner](#)

