

## **FIRE SAFETY POLICY**

### **Approval**

**Approved by: University Court**

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## UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

## FIRE SAFETY POLICY

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**FOREWORD BY THE PRINCIPAL**

The University is committed to excellence in all its activities. This includes ensuring the fire safety of our staff, our students and visitors to the University. Our Fire Safety Policy outlines how we set about achieving this and it gives particular attention to the critical role of line managers in making sure that all of the fire safety matters under their control are monitored.

I am committed to the Policy and have overall responsibility for its implementation. However each one of us has an important role to play in ensuring and maintaining good standards of fire safety in the places where we work and in making sure that fire safety is central to everything we do.

Professor Ian Diamond  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

## **Introduction**

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 as amended and Practical Fire Safety Guidance documents issued under the Act require a management commitment to fire safety standards in premises and in the maintenance of a culture of fire safety. There should be clearly defined fire safety arrangements for the protection of all persons using the premises including staff, students and visitors and this should include the arrangements for planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of fire safety measures. The arrangements cover management standards that should be achieved in all premises in respect of:

Emergency fire action plan;

Fire safety information and training;

Fire drills;

Maintenance of fire safety measures and

Recording information and keeping records.

**A) FIRE SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of the University of Aberdeen to take all reasonable and practicable steps to safeguard the safety of all employees and students from fire while at work and to protect other persons from hazards to fire safety arising out of the University's activities.

The following principles are fundamental to the management of fire safety in the University:

1. The maintenance and continuing development of fire safety management systems are priorities for the University. Not only do we wish to reduce the risks of injuries and ill health but we also recognise that the effective management of fire safety can make a significant contribution to the performance of the University by helping minimize losses and liabilities.
2. Fire safety matters are line management responsibilities. Accordingly individual members of the University staff are required to take responsibility for fire safety in all areas/activities under their control.
3. The requirements of fire safety legislation set the minimum standards of fire safety performance which the University requires.
4. The development throughout the University of a culture supportive of fire safety is essential for the achievement of adequate control over risks.
5. Individual Heads of School and Heads of Support Services must make arrangements for the implementation of this policy which are appropriate to the size and structure of their School/Service and the nature of its activities.

To ensure the Policy is kept up to date, it will be reviewed at least once each year and more frequently if circumstances demand.

**B) ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FIRE SAFETY****1) University Court**

The University Court has overall responsibility for setting and periodically reviewing the University's Fire Safety Policy and for ensuring its effective implementation in Colleges and Support Services.

**2) Operating Board**

The Operating Board has been delegated authority by the University Court to set and periodically review the University's Fire Safety Policy and to take necessary steps to ensure its effective implementation in Colleges and Support Services. The University's Health and Safety Committee (including fire safety) Chairperson is a member of the Operating Board.

**3) Senior management of the University**

- (a) The Principal has overall responsibility for implementation of the University Fire Safety Policy.
- (b) Vice Principals/University Secretary are responsible for implementation of the Policy in their areas of control and, in particular,
  - for ensuring that individual Heads of Schools/Support Services under their line management take necessary action to satisfy the requirements of the Policy and
  - for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to Heads of Schools/Support Services to enable them to meet their fire safety responsibilities.
- (c) The University Secretary who convenes the University Health and Safety Committee (including fire safety) is also the member of the University's Management Group charged with overseeing the University's arrangements for the management of fire safety.

**4) University Health and Safety Committee**

The remit of the University Health and Safety Committee is as stated in the University's Health, Wellbeing and Safety Policy.

**5) Central Fire Safety Functions**

The University Fire Safety Adviser, under the direction of the Director of Health Safety and Wellbeing, will:

Provide specialist advice to the Operating Board (through the University Health and Safety Committee) and

Advise and assist individual Schools/Support Services with the development, implementation and maintenance of their own fire safety arrangements.

## 6) **Heads Of Schools/Support Services**

The key to effective fire safety management in the University is the management action taken by individual Schools and Support Services. Nearly all of the activities of the University which give rise to significant risk take place under the control of University Schools and Support Services.

In conjunction with the University Fire Safety Adviser, each Head of School/Support Service is responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining an effective fire safety management system (including records) which is appropriate for the School/Support Service.

The fire safety arrangements applicable to a particular activity in the University will be driven by the University Fire Safety Policy (this document).

## 7) **Director of Estates**

- Shall assume responsibility and maintain records for fire safety matters as regards the fabric, fixtures and fittings of University buildings and installed fire safety equipment and:
- Shall ensure the routine testing and servicing and maintenance records of the fire safety arrangements and recording of same;
- Shall give consideration to contingency plans for when systems relating to fire are out of order (for example, alarm panels, smoke detectors);
- Shall ensure that all Estates contractors are aware of the fire emergency procedures including the emergency evacuation arrangements determined from the completed fire risk assessment for the premises.

## 8) **Fire safety concerns**

It is expected that most fire safety related issues will be resolved by discussions within the School/Support Service concerned. An individual member of staff with a concern about a fire safety matter should discuss it initially with his/her line manager or with the local Safety Co-ordinator/Adviser. If the matter is not resolved in this way, it should be brought to the attention of the Head of School/Support Service.

## 9) **Fire Risk Assessments**

The purpose of assessments is to provide an assessment of the risk to life from fire, and, where appropriate, to make recommendations to ensure compliance with fire safety legislation. The assessment will not address the risk to property or business continuity from fire.

- (a) The carrying out of fire risk assessments is fundamental to the achievement of satisfactory standards of fire safety. Fire risk assessments will consider both the University's buildings (including fixtures and fittings) and the use to which those buildings are put by Schools/Support Services.

- (b) The University Fire Safety Adviser will regularly carry out fire risk assessments and reviews and report the findings to individual Schools/Support Services and the Estates Section both of whom, where necessary, will remedy any deficiencies found.
- (c) Fire risk assessments documents will be held by both the University Fire Safety Adviser and occupiers of assessed buildings. Assessment documents have to be shown when requested to the relevant enforcing authority, which is the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- (d) In respect of matters which come under their control, Heads of School/Support Service must:
- Implement improvements identified in the assessment as under their control;
  - Agree with other Schools/Support Services in the same building and the University Fire Safety Adviser, who will be responsible for supervising and implementing emergency evacuation arrangements, including the appointment of floor checkers where necessary, for the building and providing necessary information to the emergency services responding to an incident;
  - Ensure that means of escape are kept in a condition such that they can be used safely at all times;
  - Provide appropriate fire safety training for their members of staff and students.
  - Ensure contractors and visitors are aware of the fire safety arrangements and assembly points.

### **C) FIRE SAFETY MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS/SUPPORT SERVICES**

Each School/Support Service must manage fire safety in a way appropriate to;  
Its size and structure;  
The nature of its activities;  
The level of risk associated with those activities.

Whatever methods are adopted, the following core elements must be incorporated into each School/Support Service's health and safety management system.

#### **a. Organisation**

- i. Each Head of School/Support Service must ensure that responsibilities for fire safety are devolved successively through the organisational structure.
- ii. The objective is to ensure that each activity involving significant risk is the clear responsibility of a member of the School/Support Service.

- iii. Ensure that fire safety is on the agenda of School/Support Service Health and Safety Committee.

**b. Fire Safety Awareness and Competence**

- i. Each School/Support Service, in consultation with the University Fire Safety Adviser, must ensure that staff and students have an appropriate awareness of fire safety and of their own roles and responsibilities and also have the necessary competence to perform tasks which can impact on fire safety. This awareness will be via the e-learning package which all staff and students are required to complete.

**c. Fires and unwanted fire alarm signals**

All fires and unwanted fire alarm signals will be reported by Security staff to the University Fire Safety Adviser who will investigate as appropriate and maintain a statistical record. Forms for this purpose are on the University's website.

**d. Emergency fire action plan**

A written emergency fire action plan and arrangements to implement the plan is required for each premises.

The evacuation of all persons, including disabled persons, is a line management responsibility that cannot be delegated to the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Emergency Fire Action Plan will be compiled by the building's occupiers, in consultation with other occupiers (if necessary) and the University Fire Safety Adviser. It will set out the action that staff and other people in the premises should take in the event of a fire.

The Emergency Fire Action Plan will be kept on the premises and will form the basis of any training and instruction that is provided.

The Emergency Fire Action Plan will set out details of the procedures to be followed by staff in the event of a fire and by any other persons present. It will be specific to the premises and items included are:

- How people will be warned if there is a fire;
- What staff should do if they discover a fire;
- What staff should do in the event of a fire;
- The arrangements for calling the Fire and Rescue Services;
- The specific action to be taken by the person in charge when the fire alarm activates or a fire is discovered;

- The procedure to be followed to evacuate the premises, taking into account any personal emergency egress plans;
- Where persons should assemble or be taken after they have left the premises and procedures for checking whether the premises have been evacuated;
- Arrangements for fighting fire by staff trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers;
- Any processes, machines or power supplies that need to be stopped or isolated if there is a fire; and
- Procedures for meeting the Fire and Rescue Service on its arrival and notifying it of the circumstances of the incident, whether all persons are accounted for and the presence of any special dangers.

## 6. **Sharing of facilities**

A School/Support Service may carry out some of its activities jointly with other Schools/Support Services or with organisations outside of the University. Some Schools/Support Services may share University facilities.

In such situations and in liaison with the University Fire Safety Adviser:

- i. The Schools/Support Services concerned must take steps to ensure cooperation on matters of fire safety with the other Schools/Support Services or organisations and
- ii. The Schools/Support Services concerned must co-ordinate their fire safety arrangements to the extent necessary for the effective management of fire safety.

## 7. **Staff and student involvement**

Every staff member and student is responsible for their own acts or omissions and the effect that these may have upon the safety of themselves or any other person. Whilst the management accepts main responsibility for the implementation of these arrangements, individuals are legally obliged to co-operate to ensure a working environment safe from the effects of fire.

Every staff member and student must:

Ensure they are aware of the precautions to be taken to prevent the outbreak of fire;

Participate in fire evacuation practices which the University organises;

Inform their line manager of anything relating to the premises which could represent a serious or immediate fire safety danger;

Report any faults/improvements on the fire safety arrangements; and

Co-operate with the University, so far as is necessary, to allow them to comply with the University's fire safety responsibilities.

## **8. Training and supervision of undergraduate and post-graduate students**

### **Undergraduate Students**

Initially undergraduate students should be assumed to be untrained in all matters of fire safety.

Each School should provide undergraduates with the training and supervision necessary to ensure their fire safety while working in University premises.

### **Postgraduate Students**

Each School must make arrangements to provide postgraduate students with such supervision as is necessary to ensure their fire safety.

The duty to supervise postgraduate students is delegated by the University to the Head of School and thence to the member of staff directly responsible for the student.

New postgraduate students should be trained in School fire safety policies and procedures.

Supervisors must not discharge their duty to supervise by relying solely upon a postgraduate student's status or apparent competence. Supervisors must be able to demonstrate that they have exercised an active supervisory role.

Active supervision does not usually mean constant attendance. However supervisors must ensure that;

1. Postgraduate projects are assessed for fire safety risks;
2. The necessary precautions are agreed with the student and, in all but the most elementary circumstances, are committed to writing;
3. Regular checks are carried out to ensure that the student is working to the agreed procedures;
4. Postgraduate students understand that significant alterations in agreed procedures must not be introduced without the supervisor's knowledge.
5. Each School must make formal arrangements to cover for the temporary absence of a postgraduate student's normal supervisor.

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