Fire safety instruction and training

1. Introduction

Fire is one of the greatest risks faced by the University. It may happen at any time, and the effects can be lethal and devastating. There are numerous examples of fires in Universities causing extreme damage and even total loss of major buildings. Fires can result from spontaneous, unpredictable events but also through carelessness, criminal intent, neglect, or a lack of awareness and vigilance. Fire safety can easily be compromised by poor management.

We must continue to promote a strong fire safety culture throughout the University. Everyone must play their part in preventing fire, obeying fire safety rules and knowing how to respond in an emergency. We have issued this guidance to help all managers discharge their fire safety duties.

2. Information

Basic fire safety information is available on Fire Action Notices throughout all buildings.

Further information is available in

- leaflets/handbooks
- fire risk assessments and other building documents
- Safety Health and Environment [SHE] Unit guidance (website).

Induction, training and fire drills all play their part in ensuring that everyone has sufficient fire safety awareness, including

- people employed part-time, working irregular hours, on shifts or at night
- people with responsibilities as session leaders (teaching and other activities)
- staff of visiting organisations, and their students/delegates

3. Induction

For most students, basic University information is sufficient, as above. Where locations/activities have particular risks or requirements (e.g. workshops, laboratories, drama studios) students may need fire safety briefings as part of local induction. This should be reviewed with the SHE Unit and noted in fire risk assessments.

For all new employees, each School/Department must ensure that they receive a fire safety induction in their normal place of work. Usually this should be on their first day, need only take 5 or 10 minutes and should cover

- the evacuation procedure (see foot of this document)
- building layout – escape routes and fire exits
- fire alarm call points
- fire action notices
• fire doors
• fire extinguishers, if relevant to role
• assembly point(s)
• basic fire prevention measures
• where relevant, any particular fire risks in their role, and the control measures.

Academic staff should be given simple instructions for teaching:

• for each location, to ascertain the escape routes, assembly point and (where relevant) safe areas (previously termed “refuges”) and assistance points
• to check for ILPs within each group (disabilities, hidden impairments) and be aware of any needs
• to brief their students at the start of the first session in each location (probably 20-30 seconds only)
• to be vigilant regarding other conditions which might affect escape (injuries/broken limbs, elderly/infirm, heavily pregnant etc.)
• in an evacuation, without any extra risk or delay to themselves, to ensure everyone leaves and that the room is clear, and to advise Security that the room is clear and/or if anyone needs assistance.

Staff who have moved office or building should receive induction in the new location, where relevant.

4. Training – general

All new staff must be enrolled on the Safety & Fire Awareness course (SHE Unit). This is a requirement of HR’s induction checklist.

Staff on very short fixed term contracts, or working minimal part-time hours, are not expected to attend the full Safety & Fire Awareness course, but should undertake the SHE Unit’s online version instead (Departmental Safety Co-ordinator should contact Julie Martin in the SHE Unit where this is required).

Fire evacuation drills provide regular reminders of fire safety information and awareness (see guidance document “Fire drills”).

An online Safety & Fire Awareness refresher course is under development. Staff receiving emails instructing them to undertake the course must do so.
5. **Training – requirements for specific roles**

The following minimum requirements for training and refresher intervals are mandatory except where indicated otherwise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Local briefing</th>
<th>Refresher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire Marshal</td>
<td>Fire Marshalling course ¹</td>
<td>SHE Unit</td>
<td>Sweep area allocated, &amp;/or arrangements</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door Warden</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>SHE Unit</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Ad loc acqu fetus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evac+Chair or StairClimber Trainer</td>
<td>Manufacturer’s course</td>
<td>Manufacturer</td>
<td>SHE Unit discretion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fire Marshalling course ¹</td>
<td>SHE Unit</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evac+Chair or StairClimber operator</td>
<td>Specific training session</td>
<td>Estates (or SHE Unit as required)</td>
<td>Staircases, routes, incident command etc</td>
<td>3 monthly practice regime ² Trainers’ discretion for full refresher ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fire Marshalling course recommended ³</td>
<td>SHE Unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDI training recommended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PEEPs provider (note: normally undertaken by Fire Safety &amp; PEEP Adviser, SHE Unit)</td>
<td>PEEP’s course</td>
<td>SHE Unit or external provider ⁴</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fire Marshalling course ¹</td>
<td>SHE Unit</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDI training recommended</td>
<td>EDI (online)</td>
<td>As recommended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key employees in areas/roles with particular fire risks ³</td>
<td>Fire extinguisher use</td>
<td>External provider ⁴</td>
<td>As part of work activity</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fire Marshalling course ¹</td>
<td>SHE Unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fire extinguisher use</td>
<td>External provider ⁴</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evac+Chair &amp;/or Stairclimber training</td>
<td>Estates (or SHE Unit as required)</td>
<td>As relevant to role &amp; location</td>
<td>3 monthly practice regime ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Responder course</td>
<td>SHE Unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Security &amp; Medway Facilities Management staff ⁵</td>
<td>Fire Marshalling course recommended ¹</td>
<td>SHE Unit</td>
<td>Own building(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Safety Coordinators and key managers with fire safety responsibilities</td>
<td>Fire Marshalling course recommended ¹</td>
<td>SHE Unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ There are longer and shorter versions of the SHE Unit’s Fire Marshalling course, generally for fire marshals with inspection duties and those without, respectively. It is acceptable for deputy fire marshals, Security and Facilities Management staff to attend the shorter version.

² Requires regular practice sessions which include all operators (strike-off limit is 6 months maximum).

³ E.g. laboratories, maintenance, theatres, kitchens.

⁴ SHE Unit must approve external provider, and liaise to ensure content is tailored to University needs.

⁵ Including Control Room Operators. Staff must not undertake First Responder duties unaccompanied until all specified training is complete.
6. **Records**

Records should be kept of all instruction and training. Inductees/trainees should preferably sign the record.

The SHE Unit keeps records of all training it delivers. All other training records should be kept by the School/Department and/or HR in a retrievable manner.

7. **Evacuation procedure**

The fire evacuation procedure below is common to all University buildings. Some details vary slightly in certain locations. It is reproduced here since it forms a major part of general fire safety awareness and training, and everyone should be familiar with it.

If you discover a fire

- keep safe – retreat from fire
- raise the alarm immediately
- evacuate
- do not attempt to tackle the fire unless fully trained
- Campus Security or Facilities Management call the Fire & Rescue Service
- (in a small minority of buildings, it is necessary to telephone Campus Security or the Fire & Rescue Service from a safe place – see Fire Action Notices in relevant buildings)

When the fire alarm sounds

- Close windows and doors if safe to do so
- Do not delay or go elsewhere to join other people or collect personal possessions
- Leave quickly but do not panic or rush unduly
- Encourage others to leave, but do not waste time persuading them
- Use the shortest exit route available
- Do not use lifts
- Report any relevant information to Campus Security
- Proceed to the assembly point
- Do not return until authorised

ACB Jan17