

Health and Safety

INTRODUCTION

Whilst carrying out the needs analysis process for the ADEPTT project Health & Safety was frequently raised as an area where part-time tutors were hazy about who does what and what actions to take in an emergency. Safety is everybody's responsibility - each member of staff and each student. It is a very important issue as failure to comply with certain aspects of Health & Safety legislation can render an individual personally liable.

As a tutor it is important to ensure you are fully informed about the regulations but that you also encourage students to understand how important it is that they take personal responsibility for health and safety in terms of their own art practice and working environment.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill. Risk assessment is a legal requirement you need to decide if a hazard is significant and whether you have it covered by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is small. It is also an ongoing process as circumstances will change and so will your student groups. You need to be continually assessing risks to take into account changing environments but also particular needs of students who may have a disability and need extra support, training or supervision. A risk assessment should be done by the institution to cover particular buildings and processes. It is also a process which can be used by any

Health and Safety

session or by any individual student in planning a project where the activities are non-standard (you may need to find an example of this from colleagues).

A project risk assessment form will often be required to cover student installations and exhibitions. The bureaucracy is there for a reason but is the last thing staff and students especially want to think about – they want to get on with it.

<p style="text-align: center;">Hazard anything that can cause harm (chemicals, machinery etc)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Risk the chance, high or low, that somebody will be harmed by the hazard.</p>
--

EXAMPLES OF PROJECT REQUESTS AT ONE INSTITUTION
RANGE FROM WANTING TO BURN A FIRE IN A 45 GALLON
DRUM CONSTANTLY FOR 3 DAYS TO STRIP THE FLESH OF
CARCASSES TO FILLING A GRAIN SILO WITH PARTS OF
SCRAP CARS. TRY TO GET THE STUDENTS TO DISCUSS
AND RETHINK THEIR PROJECT OUTLINES TO WHAT CAN
REASONABLY BE UNDERTAKEN.

Processes and machinery in use in workshops will be covered by local risk assessments and where applicable COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health) assessments. These assessments should be available in the workshops for consultation by users.

WORKSHOPS

There are risks and hazards associated with the machinery, tools, equipment and technology in the workshops and certain specialist materials and media used. For example, spraying with aerosols, cutting with knives, blades or saws, or working with clay you will need to be aware of special health and safety considerations.

There will usually be obligatory induction programmes to provide instruction and guidance on the use of equipment. It is important that you and the students only operate the equipment you have been inducted to and only in the way you have been shown. Technician

support will often be available in the workshops to support you but not to take full responsibility for health and safety issues.

There will also be some general health and safety requirements for all the workshops such as appropriate footwear, having to tie long hair back, no jewellery, no eating and drinking and having to wear protective clothing.

"IN MODEL DESIGN A STUDENT WAS HIT IN THE FOREHEAD BY A PIECE OF MDF AND NEARLY BLINDED. IT WAS A LEVEL 1 STUDENT WHO HAD BEEN 'TRAINED' ON THE MACHINES BUT WAS EMBARKING ON HER FIRST PROJECT, KEEN TO GET ON AND NERVOUS ABOUT DOING THE RIGHT THING. IT WAS AN OBVIOUS MISTAKE. NO GUARDING WAS USED AND THE MATERIAL FLICKED UP AND HIT HER IN THE FOREHEAD. LUCKILY SHE WAS OKAY BUT SHE NEARLY LOST HER SIGHT. SHE IS A PROFESSIONAL MODEL MAKER NOW BUT IT SHOWS THAT STUDENTS NEED TO BE UNDER SUPERVISION. THERE SHOULD BE A TUTOR OR TECHNICIAN THERE. "

Also be careful when describing and demonstrating certain techniques, especially if you think the students may replicate them at home - be very clear and give precautions.

"In one workshop the students heated microcrystalline wax and white spirit in a pan in a water bath under controlled conditions to produce a desired artistic effect. The students went home and repeated the task but applied the heat directly and too quickly causing spontaneous combustion and a completely burnt out kitchen."

STUDIO SAFETY

Students will be allocated their own working space within the studios.

Chemicals, solvents and aerosols used in these areas all present hazards and appropriate permission will have to be sought before they can be brought into the studio. Walkways and exits must always be kept clear to ensure that the studios can be walked through in

Health and Safety

safety and in the event of an emergency there is free access for evacuation and for the emergency services. Any requirement for working at height must be approved and a risk assessment will be necessary.

In addition, it is important to make sure you are aware of any students who are particularly at risk, for example through asthma, allergies to chemicals, epilepsy etc.

Talking Point

You are teaching a large group which has been split into smaller tutorial groups. Some are in the dark room whilst others are continuing with projects in the workshop. You are the responsible academic but you can't be everywhere at one. How do you deal with this scenario?

OFF-SITE

Whether this is at a work placement or on a trip, care still needs to be taken to ensure health and safety issues have been considered.

Practices that go on in industry are sometimes poor with a resulting increase in the number of accidents. High workloads may reduce the time that academic staff have to check out placements but this task must be completed for the students' health and safety.

"ONE STUDENT CUT OFF PART OF HIS HAND WHILST WORKING A CIRCULAR SAW DURING A WORK PLACEMENT. THE STAFF TOLD HIM TO USE THE MACHINE WITHOUT THE GUARD. IT IS VERY HARD FOR A STUDENT TO STAND UP FOR HIMSELF IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT. THERE IS OFTEN A REALLY FAST TURN AROUND IN BUSINESS FOR MODEL MAKERS AND CORNERS MAY BE CUT IN TERMS OF SAFE PRACTICES IN ORDER TO GET THE JOB COMPLETED ON TIME."

Students on organised trips also need to be supervised carefully by the appropriate number of staff and careful consideration given to their activities.

ON A WEEK'S TRIP TO CORNWALL A SCULPTURE STUDENT DECIDED TO DO A PROJECT ENTITLED 'LOSING SIGHT OF

LAND', TAKING HIMSELF TO THE POINT THAT HE COULD NO LONGER SEE LAND AND PHOTOGRAPHING THE EXPERIENCE. HOW AND BY WHOM WAS HE BEING SUPERVISED AND WHAT BACK UP ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN PUT INTO PLACE AS HE FLOATED OUT TO SEA ON A RAFT? HAD THIS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE COASTGUARD, SO WAS THERE A BACK-UP BOAT?

He was an excellent student and produced great work but how was the preparatory work documented and discussed?

WORKING WITH THE TECHNICAL STAFF

Technicians are there to provide expertise, knowledge and support. They want the students to get on and progress but they also need to have control over the processes and machinery being used.

"A core stock of chemicals is kept by the university and issued by technicians with clear health and safety advice. The problems come when tutors source their own supplies and bring them in. Often it is a new process that will come in this way through the back door. The academic staff think of a better way of doing something, the technicians aren't told in time to get supplies in so they do it themselves. Different tutors can also conflict over the best way to do things. Some staff don't know the right way to go about getting supplies in on time whereas others do but whether it is through ignorance or innocence it does happen and has to be coped with."

There will be a good experience and knowledge base available from the technicians. Don't try to do things on the quiet, talk to the technicians about any problems and they will try to help.

HEALTH & SAFETY LEGISLATION – THE DUTY OF CARE

Your Health, Safety and Welfare at work are protected by law.

Health and Safety

Your employer has a duty to protect you and keep you informed about health and safety.

You have a responsibility to look after yourself and others.
The university or college has a duty of care under Civil Law to everybody on the Campus and a legal duty to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act ("HASAWA").

HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974

In England and Wales, the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 is the key piece of legislation in terms of health and safety. Employers have the prime responsibility to comply with the legal requirements and must ensure that health and safety is managed effectively in educational establishments in order to protect both employees and non-employees, including students.

Further regulations have since been approved to set minimum safety requirements and to place an action on employers to carry out risk assessments of hazards within their organisations and to act upon the assessments. These regulations include the Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations (1981) and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (1988)

Under the Single European Act 1987 a further six sets of regulations were introduced in 1992. There are often collectively referred to as the 'six pack' and cover the following areas: Management of Health & Safety at work, Manual Handling, Display Screen Equipment, Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare, Provision and use of Workplace Equipment and Personal Protective Equipment.

This legislation is enforced by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) who also have a role in investigating serious accidents in the workplace.

EMPLOYER'S DUTIES IN GENERAL INCLUDE:

Making your workplace safe and without risks to health
Ensuring plant and machinery are safe and that safe systems of work are set and followed

Ensuring articles and substances are moved, stored and used safely
Providing adequate instruction, training and supervision as necessary
Setting up emergency procedures and providing adequate first-aid facilities

Making sure that the workplace satisfies health, safety and workplace requirements e.g. for ventilation, temperature, lighting and sanitary, washing and rest facilities

AS AN EMPLOYEE YOU HAVE LEGAL DUTIES TOO, WHICH INCLUDE:

Taking reasonable care for your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what you do or do not do

Co-operating with your employer on health and safety

Correctly using work items provided by your employer, including personal protective equipment, in accordance with training or instructions

Not interfering with or misusing anything provided for your health, safety or welfare

ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

When it comes to the processes to follow in an emergency situation it is really just a common sense approach – but you do need to check out the procedures for the Institution you are working in. For example, is there a central contact point in the event of an emergency or a specific emergency number to dial?

It is impossible to eliminate risk completely so it is important for you to know what to do in a number of emergency situations

- (a) What action to take on discovering a FIRE – remember you are not just responding for yourself, you may need to be directing students and therefore must be clear in your instruction.

If you discover a fire or suspect a fire due to the presence of smoke in a building:

Sound the alarm. Fire alarm call points will be situated on exit routes from buildings. From a safe place call the emergency number to inform of the location and extent of the problem.

On hearing an alarm

Leave the building immediately by the nearest escape route, closing all doors behind you. Report to your nearest assembly point.

Health and Safety

Do not take any risks.

Do not return to the building until authorised.

Do not use lifts

- (b) In the event of **ILLNESS** or a personal injury **ACCIDENT**:
Call for the nearest First Aider. Names, locations and contact numbers should be readily available, usually on notice boards.

The first aider will call for an ambulance if necessary. Do not move the patient unless absolutely necessary.

All accidents must be formally reported as soon as practicable. A specific university procedure and documentation will be in place for this.

- (c) **BOMB ALERT** If you discover a suspicious package or receive a bomb warning, then telephone the emergency number.

Response to bomb alerts. Every bomb threat is evaluated and a decision made on the most appropriate response. This may be evacuation of a building, group of buildings or the whole campus. You will be informed of what action to take, what route to take and where to assemble.

On receiving the evacuation instruction - If you are in or near your normal place of work: Collect your valuables, and leave the building by the notified route and go to the assembly point on foot. If you are elsewhere when you hear the alert, then proceed immediately to the assembly point. Do not return to your own building.

CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

It is very difficult to give definitive information on health & safety as documentation and procedures will vary from one institution to another, but what we can supply you with is a list of questions that you should be confident you are able to answer for the place that you are working in.

STUDENTS

What procedures are used where students' projects might be risky?
What advice is given on health and safety in workshops and studios?

FIRE

What action should you take if you discover a fire?
What action should you take on hearing the fire alarm?
Describe the sound of the fire alarm
Where is your nearest means of raising the fire alarm?
Where and what type are the nearest fire extinguishers ?
What type of extinguisher would you use for

- (A) **electrical fire,**
- (B) **chemical fire,**
- (C) **paper fire?**

What is your fire escape route?
Where is your assembly point?

ACCIDENTS / FIRST AID

Where is your nearest first aid box?
Who are the designated first aiders for your area? How would you contact them?
What is the procedure for reporting accidents in your area?
Is there an internal emergency telephone number for the campus where you are working? What is it?

SAFETY RESPONSIBILITY / PROCEDURES

Who is your departmental safety officer and how would you contact them?

Health and Safety

Have you read and understood the university or college safety information and procedures?

Where would you find out more information about health and safety issues?

YOUR WORK AND SAFETY

Which of the following hazards might you encounter in your line of work?

Manual handling, lifting equipment, noise, chemical, tripping hazards, electrical, hazardous substances, slipping, waste disposal, working at height, machinery, lasers, flammables, hand tools, clinical waste?

Are you able to identify any other hazards specific to your work?

Do you know how to carry out a risk assessment?

What type of personal protective equipment are you required to use for your work at the university?

Describe the procedure for reporting of hazards or faults which you discover

MISCELLANEOUS

Where is smoking permitted in your area of work?

What checks should you make before using any work equipment?

If you bring in electrical equipment from outside, what action should you take?

Have you been designated a "user" of display screen equipment? If YES, has your workstation been assessed? What training will you be given?

Will your work involve much lifting and carrying? If so, can you attend a handling and lifting training course?