

**School of Life Sciences  
Health and Safety Management Committee Meeting  
3 December 2003**

***Present***

Professor CP Downes (Chair), Ms G Alexander, Dr JA Anderson, Professor JJ Blow, Dr JA Chudek, Dr JR Elliott, Professor GM Gadd, Ms L Grayson, Professor DG Hardie, Dr NR Helps, Professor W N Hunter, Mrs M Lacey, Mr IR Leith, Dr EL Newman, Ms K Paterson (Safety Office), Dr AR Prescott, Dr PM Taylor, Professor CA Tickle, Professor C Watts, Professor CJ Weijer. Miss J McLean (in attendance)

***Apologies***

Mrs I Blair

Professor Downes welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Deputy Division Heads who had attended and Ms Paterson, the Acting Head of Safety.

**ACTION**

**1. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes were approved.

**2. Matters Arising**

**a) H&S Policy & Guidance for Undergraduate Students**

Ms Grayson informed the Committee that there is no separate policy relating specifically to undergraduate students. The existing SLS Policy applies to LSTU, and with a few minor amendments/additions will adequately cover the managerial roles and responsibilities relating to undergraduate teaching. Ms Grayson and Ms Lacey to amend document accordingly and copy to Jim Elliott for comment.

**LG/ML**

Before the next meeting of this Committee, Ms Grayson and Ms Lacey will develop a one page undergraduate's guide to good laboratory practice for inclusion in every module handbook.

**LG/ML**

It was noted that as part of the Molecular Science module, students are given a 20 minute H&S session and have to sign their attendance. Students are not permitted to participate in practical classes until they have attended this session. Ms Grayson proposed that this is applied to all undergraduate modules. Ms Grayson and Ms Lacey to discuss with LSTU teaching staff and attempt to implement before next meeting.

**LG/ML**

Discussion took place on whether assessment of students' understanding of H&S issues could be factored into the examination process.

It was agreed that all practical class activities must be risk assessed and students must be made aware of the key hazards and risks. Kirsten Paterson stated that students would not be required to sign risk assessments, providing there is a mechanism for

ensuring they have read and understood them. Ms Grayson and Ms Lacey to work with LSTU Teaching Staff in devising a standard method of conveying necessary information to students.

**LG/ML**

It was agreed that demonstrators need to receive H&S training and fully understand the risk assessments for the classes they participate in.

#### **b) Appropriate Action in the event of non-compliance**

It was noted that non-compliance is not an option and Ms Grayson is not required to provide a prescribed set of actions. Managers have personal responsibility and must use their own best judgement. If they feel unable to do this for some reason on any occasion, the problem should be passed up to the next level in the reporting structure.

**All**

Kirsten Paterson stressed the importance of keeping a written record, even if this is merely to state that someone was spoken to about non-compliance.

It was stressed that managers must lead by example.

#### **c) Measuring Performance**

Ms Grayson to analyse the HSE document, “A Guide to Measuring Health & Safety Performance”, and examine its applicability to SLS.

**LG**

Possible mechanisms for measuring performance were discussed, including:

- inspection reports – in particular, looking for improvement from one inspection to the next;
- scrutiny of fulfilment of H&S roles and responsibilities as part of the appraisal process;
- use of proper project management to identify targets and timescales against which performance can be measured;
- accident/incident statistics – the shortcomings of using these as a performance indicator were noted. It was agreed that a proactive approach is preferable to a reactive one.

### **3. New Health & Safety Documentation**

#### **a) Staff H&S Portfolio**

This document is given to all new staff and is also available on the new SLS H&S website. Ms Grayson will add the basic training checklists in time for the next Committee meeting. All new personnel will be required to complete basic H&S training in order to obtain a swipe card. It was agreed that those required to deliver the basic H&S training must first be fully trained in how to do so.

**LG/IB**

Ms Paterson informed the Committee that it is hoped the emergency phone number will be manned 24 hours a day from next year. At the moment anyone calling this number outwith normal working hours is directed to the emergency services automatically. It was noted that the emergency number sticker being placed on every

phone in the University was a good idea.

Professor Downes thanked the members of the H&S Working Group for all the work they have put into this, and other safety documents, since the last meeting.

**b) Procedures to Ensure the Safety of Visitors**

The Committee was informed that the “Information for Visitors” brochure has been approved and is currently being issued by WTB Reception.

Ms Paterson suggested the next time the document is revised it should include information on special needs and disabilities. This was agreed. **LG**

It was noted that Section 6.1 of the “Procedures to Ensure the Safety of Visitors” document (Children on unofficial visits Accompanied by a Parent or a Guardian) has now been amended at the request of the RMG. The School will adhere to the legal definition of a child, which is someone under the age of 16.

The document was approved by the Committee. Ms Grayson to inform relevant parties and make document available on H&S website. **LG**

**c) Availability on intranet**

It was noted that Ms Grayson had received very little feedback from the SLS H&S website/LARA System pilot group. It was agreed that she should ask the pilot group for feedback and constructive criticism by 31 January 2004. **LG**

The general consensus was that the site should be opened up to a wider audience as soon as possible. **LG**

It was also agreed to publish the minutes of this meeting on the H&S website. **LG/JM**

**4. Risk Assessment System**

As with the H&S website, Ms Grayson is awaiting feedback from the pilot group. (Main reason for lack of feedback appears to be lack of time.) Professor Downes stressed that this risk assessment is a key priority for support staff and that Division Heads should convey this at their divisional meetings. **Division Heads**

It was agreed that the system should be opened up to a wider audience as soon as possible. **LG**

Ms Grayson stressed the need for training, not just on how to use the LARA System but on risk assessment in general. Kirsten Paterson stated that Safety Services have a risk assessment training package ready for delivery in 2004. Ms Grayson to liaise with Kirsten Paterson on this issue. **LG**

It was noted that converting to a web interface is a substantial project that must be properly resourced. Professor Downes asked that the resources required for web interface development be clearly identified. Ms Grayson to consult Kiran Oza. **LG**

It was noted that this may soon become a University-wide issue.

## **5. Inspections**

### **a) SEPA Inspections**

SEPA inspections took place on 19/5/03 and 23/7/03. In both instances general compliance was observed.

The issue of “Best Practical Means” has been raised by both the SEPA Inspectors and David Hewick. Ms Grayson is to call a meeting of the SLS RPSs early next year to discuss this very topic. Key discussion points and proposed actions will be minuted in order to provide evidence that this matter is being taken seriously.

**LG**

A drive to standardise procedures/paperwork throughout SLS will also be undertaken in 2004.

It was noted that in terms of minimising how much radioisotope we acquire and ultimately dispose of, the School is often restricted by the limited range of pack-sizes offered by suppliers.

### **b) Liquid Nitrogen Facility Inspections (Internal)**

The School has failed to comply with many of the points raised in the HSE report arising from the May 2000 inspection. Internal inspections were carried out in May 2003 in order to identify outstanding problems and required remedial action. The resulting report has been issued to all relevant parties. Facilities will be re-inspected in March 2004. Instances of blatant non-compliance will be brought to the attention of this Committee at the next meeting. Minor non-compliance issues will be dealt with by the H&S Working Group.

**H&SWG**

Discussion took place on the proposed new self-filling tanks in CIR and the problem of individual tanks on every floor. Mr Leith to consider such outstanding problems and devise potential solutions.

**IRL**

## **6. Ethical Approval for use of Human Blood/Tissue in Research Projects**

The second draft of this document was brought to the attention of the committee. Document will be finalised and made available on the H&S website before the next committee meeting, pending discussions with the Tayside Committee on Medical Research Ethics, Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service and Professor Boxer’s Research Governance Framework working group.

**LG**

**LG**

Ms Grayson to seek clarification on the following:

- where responsibility lies when working with collaborators;
- ethical issues relating to the production and use of primary cell lines;
- procedures for safe transport of blood/tissue between SLS and Ninewells.

## **7. Accident Statistics for 2003**

Discussion took place on the importance of accident/incident reporting. It was agreed

that it should not be viewed as just a form-filling exercise and that action must be taken to prevent recurrences. Ms Paterson informed the Committee that reporting of incidents and near misses is also important.

It was agreed that Ms Grayson will issue clearer guidance as to what should be formally reported and that accident statistics should be published on the H&S website.

**LG**

#### **8. Any Other Competent Business**

It was noted that there are special regulations governing the shipping and packaging of dangerous goods (e.g. hazardous chemicals or biological material) and that key members of staff have been trained in order to ensure we are fully aware of the requirements and achieving compliance.

Ms Grayson conveyed Kiran Oza's opinion that a new server may be required for the H&S databases. Professor Downes asked for clarification on how urgent this is. Ms Grayson to discuss with Kiran Oza.

**LG**

Professor Downes asked the H&S Working Group to identify other H&S related items that should be routinely budgeted for.

**H&SWG**