

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH POLICY

Purpose and Context

This policy refers to current health and safety legislation, university policies, professional guidelines and departmental protocols.

The specialist field of occupational health covers:

- (i) Health related to work; and
- (ii) Work and its impact on health.

Scope

The purpose of the university's occupational health service is to provide a professional, effective and efficient resource which is proactive in the promotion of the health and well-being of physical and mental health of staff and students in relation to their work or studies.

The occupational health team will assist in the identification, development, implementation, monitoring and review of strategies for the delivery of occupational health services across the university.

It is not a replacement or substitute for the services provided by general practitioners or other specialists and any treatments or prescription requirements remain their responsibility, not that of the occupational health service.

The occupational health team takes an impartial view and remains objective in the advice given to employers, workers, academic, professional, support staff and students.

1 Introduction

The main duties of the occupational health team are: -

- (a) Setting, implementing and reviewing SMART service standards and departmental procedures which relate to a demonstrated evidence base.
- (b) Undertake pre-employment and pre-training assessment of health related to the post or course or course of study ([refer to appendix 1](#)).
- (c) Dealing with manager, tutor or self-referrals to the occupational health team ([refer to appendix 2](#)).
- (d) Collaboration to identify and reduce the causes of occupational ill health – this can include liaison and information exchange with external services, general practices or specialists.
- (e) Interpreting information obtained from external sources into tangible advice regarding fitness for work or courses of study.

- (f) Undertaking relevant risk-based health surveillance programmes in accordance with the COSHH Regulations, and health promotion relating to risks such as noise, respiratory and skin sensitisers, and biological agents.
- (g) Providing advice and information regarding the control of work-related risks ([refer to appendix 2](#)).
- (h) Recommending the use of counselling services ([refer to appendix 2](#)).
- (i) Offering guidance on adjustments to assist with work under the remit of the Equality Act 2010.
- (j) Giving advice regarding sickness absence, rehabilitation to work, redeployment and, where appropriate, and retirement on ill health grounds.
- (k) Undertaking vaccinations and / or blood tests relevant to occupational risks and follow up of body fluid contamination incidents, including sharps injuries ([refer to appendix 3](#)).
- (l) Identification of recruitment requirements and co-ordination of clearance for Mental Health First Aiders.
- (m) Implementation of wellbeing activities for the staff population.

2 Confidentiality, record keeping and expressing concerns

- (a) The occupational health team works within strict guidelines relating to ethics and confidentiality laid down by their professional bodies.
- (b) The records system is designed so that the confidential aspects of clinical information are only accessible to authorised staff within the service.
- (c) Clinical information will not normally be released to anyone without the written consent of the individual concerned ([refer to appendix 2](#)).
- (d) Past or current clients wishing to access their records or make an expression of concern should follow departmental guidelines.

3 Occupational health staff

- (a) The department is supported by the Occupational Health Administration Team (OHAT) who will normally be the first point of contact.
- (b) The Occupational Health Manager (OHM) takes the lead on development and delivery of core occupational health services to both the university and to certain student groups. The OHM reports to the Director of Human Resources Group.
- (c) The Occupational Health Nursing Advisers (OHNAs), with reference to the OHM, undertake core occupational health activities.
- (d) Where holding the relevant qualification, The OHM and OHNAs can act as practice teachers to qualified nurses undertaking specialist qualifications in occupational health – clients of the department may be assessed or reviewed by a student under the supervision of either of these.

- (e) The occupational health team has the facility to refer staff or students to a physician qualified in occupational medicine where a specialist opinion is required to support the advice being provided (e.g. ill health retirement, suitability to commence or resume a course of study following a significant ill health issue).

Appendix 1: pre-employment and pre-training health assessment

Initial contact is made via the recruitment department or the relevant school who will issue a health declaration form to the individual.

This should be fully completed with any supplementary information requested attached to the back.

The form should be returned directly to the occupational health team for assessment and marked as 'Private and Confidential'. The individual is not expected to discuss the contents with anyone else.

The individual will be contacted by telephone or letter if further information is required to support any advice provided to management or academic staff and should it be recommended that additional information is supplied to management / course leaders your consent will be taken for this.

Where there is a need to undergo health surveillance, blood tests or vaccinations relevant to the individual's training course or work this will be advised to their manager or course leader to be implemented when the individual starts work or course of study.

Appendix 2: Provision of advice & referrals to occupational health

Referrals by managers and academic staff

Written referrals should be made where there is a concern regarding health-related to work or work's impact on health. The relevant paperwork is available from the Human Resources Department, or in the case of student referrals from the OHAT.

Referrals will be reviewed by members of the OHAT holding a SCPHN-OH qualification.

Dignity at work

- a. Staff who have concerns regarding harassment or bullying at work should refer to and follow the university's ['Dignity at Work - Good Practice Guide and Procedure on Dealing with Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace'](#)

Counselling provisions

Where it is assessed as appropriate by the OHM or OHNAs, employees experiencing personal or work-based problems may be offered access to confidential counselling services. Students will be referred to the Students Wellbeing and Disability department.

Self-referrals

Staff concerned that their work may be affecting their health or health affecting their work and who are not able to liaise with their manager, can refer to members of the occupational health team by email or telephone and will be given the opportunity to discuss appropriate options. It is not possible to operate a drop in service for self-referrals.

The OHAT will be able to take simple information from enquirers to check whether occupational health is the most appropriate route to deal with the problem. This is aimed to avoid any delays in treatment that should be sourced from general practitioners.

Staff and students must be aware that if, as the result of a self-referral, it is identified that there is a significant risk to the health of themselves or others, the occupational health team is under an obligation to make the university's management aware of this. If the individual is not in agreement with this course of action the occupational health team member will consult with his or her relevant professional body before taking any further action and the individual will be advised of the outcome.

Advice on work-related health matters

Staff and managers can ask the department for advice regarding work related ill health and following any injuries sustained in the course of work, health surveillance issues or work-related travel health.

Health promotion

The occupational health team is involved in initiatives and strategies relating to staff and student health promotion and health education.

Appendix 3: vaccinations, blood tests and body fluid contamination incidents

Students undertaking health studies courses and certain other staff of the university will be recommended to undergo vaccination relevant to the work-based health risks that they may encounter. These are based on current Department of Health guidance and local risk assessment.

Advice regarding what applies will be provided by the occupational health team and any individual in doubt should speak to their line manager or course leader about any particular hazards they think they may need protection from in the course of their work.

Body fluid contamination incidents (including sharps injuries) should always be discussed with the department as a matter of urgency (i.e. as soon as the incident occurs).

Where students are on a clinical placement either on or away from Queensgate campus they should make themselves familiar with local policy before the placement starts and follow this in the event of any incident advising it to the occupational health after initial action has taken place.

University staff who may come into contact with body fluids or sharps (may include used needles) in the course of their work should make themselves familiar with their departmental guidelines.

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| Compliance Checks: | HRG SMT regularly review to ensure compliance |
| Related Policies/Procedures: | Dignity at Work - Good Practice Guide and Procedure on Dealing with Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace. |

| REVISION HISTORY | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Version | Date | Revision description/Summary of changes | Author |
| V1.0 | Sept 2019 | Major redraft under new Policy Framework – removed from H&S Policy, now standalone policy (approval required) | Head of Occupational Health |