



College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (Edinburgh bioQuarter Campus)

Annual Report on Health & Safety (2024)

Summary: This is the nineteenth annual report concerning health and safety (H&S) activities pertaining to The University of Edinburgh's College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (CM&VM) operations on the Edinburgh bioQuarter (EbQ) campus.

The H&S Manager remains grateful to all who, throughout the year, have contributed so substantially to the quality of and compliance with health, safety and welfare arrangements.

Campus Development Activities: The new Usher Building is now substantially occupied and has undergone its first external health and safety audit, led by Turner & Townsend.

Health & Safety and operations meetings have been a regular feature of progress throughout reconfiguration works within the Queen's Medical Research Institute.

Works remain anticipated also in respect of an extension of the Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic.

A core of academic psychiatry relocated to Chancellor's Building from Kennedy Tower, Royal Edinburgh Hospital towards the end of the year, for which preparations included the prior delivery of training related to health and safety induction and lone worker safety.

Plans and Policies: Numbers of amendments (some substantial) have been made during the year to Sections of (and Appendices to) the Safety Manual for UofE buildings on the EbQ campus; notification of these was made to colleagues through the medium of Safety Bulletins sent electronically to everyone on the campus who is registered on one of our various email distribution lists.

The Manual is scheduled for its next triennial “root and branch” review during 2025, although periodic updates to specific Sections of the Manual can still be expected on an occasional basis as circumstances dictate.

Safety Audits: The momentum of campus-internal safety audits was maintained during the year (at whole-building and individual Centre levels, or focusing on specific laboratories and areas, including those for a derogated CL3 laboratory in Chancellor’s Building and a laboratory suite within QMRI currently being prepared for use as a CL3 facility. These took the form of visits and safety tours, and scrutiny of samples of paperwork such as risk assessments, training records and self-inspection reports.

Although the standard remains generally very high, for which managers and all teams are to be commended, recommendations were made regarding means to achieve some further improvements to arrangements.

In respect of the CL3 laboratories, pro-active monitoring also included challenge by exercise of emergency arrangements, which also resulted in a satisfactory outcome.

Fire drills were carried out for UofE (and UofE-occupied) buildings on the EbQ campus during 2024, with arrangements to complete the programme having been agreed with the University’s Fire Safety Unit; where conducted, these all were assessed as satisfactory.

Certain specific aspects of CM&VM operations on the EbQ campus were audited during 2024 by the HSE, SEPA, Police Scotland, and Turner & Townsend, all of which ultimately resulted in satisfactory outcomes.

Training: Something in the order of one or two hundred hours of general induction and subject-specific training sessions were delivered by the H&S Manager during 2024 (mainly through the medium of on-line meeting platforms, though some in-person training was delivered). This included delivery of training to undergraduate medical students during Freshers Week.

By continuing to deliver some specific training courses directly from within our own resources, which were previously procured from external providers (*e.g.* compressed and laboratory gas safety, and liquid nitrogen safety), it is estimated that the CM&VM, and some areas of the larger UofE campus, the College has been able to avoid spending many

thousands of pounds per year, and also to disseminate training to a greater number of people across the wider UofE campus

Numerous self-paced, self-taught training presentations, prepared by the H&S Manager, and published on H&S pages of the CM&VM's web site, were updated during the year, some of which are being specified as directed-learning courses in respect of risk assessments for matters such as work with pathogens and genetically modified organisms.

Training was delivered also to colleagues in partner organisations based on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus, elsewhere within the wider University upon request or by invitation, and occasionally more widely afield. Access to training is advertised by sharing information with colleagues on other campuses.

During the year, the H&S Manager was, once again, an invited trainer at a number sessions arranged by the Royal Society of Biology and also by Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

Committees: The H&S Manager participated in numerous Committee meeting throughout the year (mostly *via* on-line meeting platforms), including the EbQ Campus H&S Committee, Centre/Building and individual Centre/Floor-level H&S Committees, GM and Biological Safety Committees, the EbQ Campus Management Team, and the University's Biological Safety Committee.

H&S Plan: All other targets set out in H&S Plan, which is subject to regular review throughout each year, were successfully delivered to the satisfaction of the Edinburgh bioQuarter Buildings H&S Committee.

Business Continuity Planning: Pending anticipated changes to the corporate approach to business continuity planning, no exercises were held during 2023 or 2024, although some related training continued to be provided during that time.

Accidents and Incidents: Of the 63 occurrences of accidents and incidents reported during 2024 (compared with 41 in 2023), of which ten were classified as 'exempt' or 'non-reportable', only one dictated the need for the casualty to be assessed by a medical professional, none resulted in absences from work, and none dictated formal notification to the HSE in the context of the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

Without in any way intending to appear complacent, the increased rate of occurrences during 2024 must be taken in the context of there now being something closing on 3,000 whole-time staff and post-graduate students and several hundred undergraduates based on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus, some engaged in the handling of substances of high consequence and involved in hazardous procedures.

Increased reporting may also be attributable in part to greater encouragement during training for colleagues to report accidents and incidents and near-misses.

Injuries caused by medical sharps, glassware and tools (16 during 2024) remain the most frequently occurring source of injury year-after-year within UofE premises on the bioQuarter campus, albeit in low total numbers, and continued attention is directed to the sharps injury avoidance training package contained within the CM&V web site.

A more detailed analysis of all incidents reported during the year is published on the College's web site.

Waste Management: During 2024, in addition to routine uplifts of waste solvents, electrical and electronic items and domestic waste throughout the year, there were two substantial uplifts of chemical waste, and monthly reports were submitted throughout the year to the University's Radiation Protection Unit (*via* RETAIN) detailing acquisition, holdings and disposal of unsealed sources of radioactivity.

Sustainability: The H&S Manager continues to actively promote a sustainability agenda for CM&VM operations on the EbQ campus, including through various training programmes.

Professional Development: The H&S Manager has continued throughout the year to complete all necessary continuous professional development programmes and self-directed learning activities (directed variously by the Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Institute for Safety in Technology and Research, the Society for Radiological Protection, the Health Research Authority, and the Royal Society of Biology) to the satisfaction of all relevant authorities.

Support for Other Areas: In anticipation of the relocation of substantial numbers of colleagues from the central area to the EbQ campus over the next few years, a close relationship between H&S practitioners on both campuses will be maintained.

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