

Uned Iechyd a Diogelwch Galwedigaethol  
Occupational Health and Safety Unit

University of Wales, Bangor

# Annual Health and Safety Report

# 2006

Report produced April 2007

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Report<sup>1</sup> considers many aspects of Health and Safety at the University and where possible compares UWB activity with national statistics, standards and practices. The Report also offers comment on health and safety performance and challenges which lay ahead.

2006 was a demanding time for health and safety management at the University, mainly due to continuing staffing difficulties at the OHSU. However there was also significant progress and in particular two important documents were produced; the revised University Health and Safety Policy and the Corporate Health and Safety Risk Assessment<sup>2</sup> - both of these documents will form the backbone of the future Health and Safety Strategy at the University.

The revised Health and Safety Policy commits the University to continual improvement and most significantly it clearly recognises that health and safety should always be an aid to education and research and not an overbearing bureaucratic obstacle. This is welcomed.

The re-organisation of academic departments and the formation of Colleges has been welcomed as an opportunity to enhance and promote a health and safety culture within constituent Schools. The creation of Colleges has also encouraged the Occupational Health and Safety Unit to evaluate its own role in ensuring Colleges and Departments receive professional, efficient, practical and above all 'supportive' advice and assistance.

During 2006 the University undertook a full staff stress survey, making it the first University in Wales to do so across a whole institution and one of only a handful in the UK. Around 45% of University staff took part in the survey and the findings are now being qualitatively assessed. It is anticipated that a wide-ranging action plan will be finalised during summer 2007.

Statistics for 2006 indicate a slight percentage increase in the occurrences of accidents and incidents during the year, for both staff and student groups. However, serious accidents and incidents remain extremely rare. Staff sickness absence levels also show a slight increase, with a total of 15,742 calendar-days reported. Statistics for direct work-related sickness absences are not yet available.

A very reassuring statistic for the year was the significant decrease in fire alarm activations and for the first time in many years there were no malicious false alarms at the University. The Estates & Facilities Department is congratulated on its efforts to improve standards and student behaviour within Halls of Residences.

There are a number of initiatives and challenges ahead for health and safety management as drivers and expectations continue to develop and grow. Confidence is high that the University is ready to meet these challenges and is also well placed to advance beyond the norm and progress and develop a quality, supportive health and safety culture.

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<sup>1</sup> The Annual Report advises on developments and activities during the calendar year 2006. However, in some cases the Report also advises on more recent [non-statistical] activities during the period of January – April 2007, where this is appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> First Version of the University-level assessment of health and safety risk exposure

## 2. INDIVIDUAL REPORTS

This Section provides a short report on key health and safety 'constituent-parts' responsible for developing, overseeing and monitoring standards across the University.

### 2.1 THE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

During 2006 the Health and Safety Committee (H&SC) commenced to operate under differing Terms of Reference; in accordance with the new Health and Safety Policy. In particular it is noted that the H&SC:

- i. now approves and implements Health and Safety Policies and Guidance Notes on behalf of Council (where these do not allocate significant additional responsibilities to individuals);
- ii. reviewed the function and necessity of its numerous Sub-Committees and consequently, to offer greater value, revised the Terms of Reference of four of its Sub-Committees and terminated one.

The revised H&SC Terms of Reference will aid the functionality and supportive aspect of the H&SC whilst enshrining further its role as not only an 'over-seeing' Committee but also as a goal setting body for health, safety and welfare on behalf of Council.

During 2006 the H&SC met on three occasions and most significantly considered and agreed the new University Health and Safety Policy.

### 2.2 THE SAFETY EXECUTIVE TASK GROUP

The Safety Executive Task Group [SEG] meets monthly, and continues to act, on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor as the University's steering and overseeing body on all aspects of health and safety management.

The Composition of SEG has recently been revised to include the Director of Estates & Facilities; the revised membership of SEG is now:

The Registrar (Chair)  
The Deputy Registrar  
The Chair of the Health and Safety Committee  
The Director of Human Resources  
The Director of Estates & Facilities  
The Head of the Occupational Health and Safety Unit  
The Safety Adviser (Secretary)

During 2006 SEG considered, progressed and advised upon many issues and developments, including:

#### i. Health and Safety Policy

For a number of months SEG considered and helped develop the revised Health and Safety Policy; in particular it sought to introduce a Policy which was both comprehensive and goal setting. The Revised policy was approved by the University Council in July 2006.

## ii. Corporate Health and Safety Risk Assessment

SEG initiated the preparation of a corporate risk assessment in respect of Health & Safety – the detailed work for the identification and assessment of risk being carried out by the Safety Adviser.

This task proved to be highly detailed and labour intensive and a final (First) version was agreed in January 2007. This is now being further evaluated and an Action Plan will be developed.

## iii. Capital Funding for Health and Safety Improvements

To aid the function of the University's Estates & Facilities Task Group [E&FTG] SEG was requested to consider estate-related health and safety hazards and produce budgeted recommendations for consideration by the E&FTG.

A total of twelve significant estate-related areas were highlighted and each was prioritised as priority A, B or C. E&FTG considered the recommendations of SEG and approved the funding of all Priority A items, namely:

- a) Provision of a 'Falls From Height' Risk Assessment and undertake priority remedial action identified by that assessment (allocation £178,000).
- b) Remove publicly accessible asbestos and key problematic materials and part-fund a re-survey of asbestos risk at the University (allocation £120,000).
- c) Undertake a glazing risk assessment and implement urgent remedial action (£15,000).
- d) Improve explosion relief and prevention measures within main Science Site Solvent Store (allocation £24,000).
- e) Provide electrical circuit protection within higher-risk buildings and areas (allocation £130,000).
- f) Pressure test and up-grade gas supply services, including marking of pipework and isolation valves within higher-risk buildings (allocation £40,000).

A total of £507,000 was committed to capital improvements for estate related health and safety hazards for the financial year 2006/07.

A further review of capital investment to improve estate-related health and safety will again be undertaken in 2007 but it is anticipated that this task will be made easier through the production of specific risk assessments and receipt of information from the estate condition survey and other similar survey results.

## iv. Radiation Safety Management

SEG has continued to consider the strategic direction and management of radiation safety at the University following the visit by the Specialist HSE Inspector in 2005.

It is noted that during 2006 the University invested over £12,000 in disposing of surplus sealed radiation sources and a further investment is anticipated in 2007 to enable the disposal of surplus un-sealed radiation sources. This investment will significantly reduce the University's stock of ionising radiation materials and consequently reduce its potential risk exposure.

#### v. Stress Management

SEG oversees policy at institutional level for the management of stress at work and continues to receive reports and provide advice. Duties in relation to developing the stress survey results has been allocated to the Staff Well-being Task and End Group, which reports to the Human Resources Task Group.

#### vi. Strategy

Planned Development Work for 2007/08 includes the production of Corporate Health and Safety Strategy for the University. It is anticipated that the Strategy will clearly identify the goals of the institution and set performance criteria so that progress may be measured. The Strategy will reflect institutional as well as national objectives and campaigns and will provide a clear direction for health and safety management at the University. [See Section 3.4]

### **2.3 THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY UNIT**

For a significant part of 2006 the Occupational Health and Safety Unit (OHSU) has been operating with a reduced workforce and with a temporary Head of Unit. This situation continues but it is anticipated that staffing will return to pre-2006 levels by the end of 2007.

The long-term Head of OHSU, David Hague, has recently taken early retirement and the Safety Adviser, Gareth W Jones, is currently acting Head pending the appointment of a new Head of OHSU. The post of Head of OHSU is being advertised nationally and a new person should take up his/her appointment by the start of the next Academic Year. The Head of OHSU reports to the Deputy Registrar.

Other staffing issues affecting the OHSU include the resignation of the Occupational Health Nursing Adviser and the election of the Assistant Safety Adviser, Lisa Fowlie, to the post of President of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH). Although the latter is a very prestigious personal appointment and brings with it significant recognition and national and international kudos, it means the Assistant Safety Adviser is effectively employed part time during her tenure.

The post of Occupational Health Nursing Adviser was reviewed in 2006 and the new job role of Nurse Practitioner in Occupational Health identified. The Nurse Practitioner will perform many of the functions previously undertaken by the Occupational Health Physician and Nursing Adviser but more of an intervention style approach is anticipated with regards to reducing sickness absence and promoting health and well-being. This new Post should be filled ahead of the new academic year 2007/08.

The OHSU continues to oversee and advise on day-to-day health and safety matters, though its ability to undertake strategic work and to significantly progress the Corporate Health and Safety Risk Assessment has been restricted by the temporary reduction in its staffing levels.

A number of initiatives are currently underway at the OHSU, these are described further in Section 4 of this Report, and it is anticipated that by 2008 the staffing situation of the OHSU will be stable and its direction and strategy clearer; this will have discernable benefits to the University as a whole.

In addition to its day-to-day advisory and supportive function the OHSU, during 2006, completed, advanced or led-on many significant issues, including:

- i. The research and production of the Corporate Health and Safety Risk Assessment (see Section 3.3).
- ii. The production of the new University Health and Safety Policy [See Section 3.1].
- iii. The introduction of revised management systems and procedures for Ionising Radiations.
- iv. The facilitation and coordination of the staff stress survey [See Section 3.5].
- v. The assessment and development of specific guidance on specialist subject areas.

The Occupational Health arm of OHSU has, as indicated earlier, seen some considerable changes during 2006. However, Occupational Health has continued to be both reactive and proactive on matters of staff health and absence (although in a limited capacity through a part-time contracted Occupational Health Nurse) and over 250 staff-consultations have been performed.

Another function of the OHSU is to record sickness absence on behalf of the University. In 2006 over 1,600 'sick-notes' were received by OHSU and entered onto the central database, and a total of 15,742 days of staff sickness absences were recorded. Further information on sickness absence can be found in Section 4.2 of this Report.

### ***OHSU External Contacts and Relationships***

An important role of the OHSU is to act as the University's representative and first-contact point for certain government agencies and enforcement authorities. Also, it is believed that the OHSU should have a role in setting an example and promoting good health, safety and welfare practices amongst the business community in North Wales and beyond.

- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

During 2006 the University received two 'complaints' through the HSE. Both Complaints were investigated and satisfactory reports were produced to the HSE and no further action was taken as the University was not found to be at fault or in contravention of legislation.

In addition to dealing with 'complaints' a number of semi-formal and informal contacts with HSE Inspectors took place during the year; these mainly relating to specific issues, general discussions or the provision of advice.

No formal HSE 'inspections' were undertaken in 2006. However, in January 2007 the HSE undertook an inspection of Genetic Modification activities and their associated Biological Hazards. These predominantly involving the School of Biological Sciences and no significant problems or issues were identified by the inspection.

HSE reported accidents (as per the appropriate accident reporting regulations) can be found within the Statistics Section of this Report [See Section 4.1].

- Environment Agency (EA)

The University received a visit from the Environment Agency's Pollution Inspector on radiation use and waste management in January 2007. This visit centred on the University's licences for the storage, use and disposal of ionising radiation sources and local protocols and record keeping for the use and disposal of radiation materials.

- Fire & Rescue Service

A number of visits and site inspections were undertaken by the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service; these mainly relating to familiarisation visits for new and significantly refurbished buildings or as result of specific concerns or enquiries. The Fire & Rescue Service also provided several Fire Safety Talks to students within Halls of Residence.

The Fire & Rescue Service continues to use University land and facilities for small-scale training exercises and the friendly relationship, built over many years, between UWB and the Fire & Rescue Service continues.

- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Railways

During 2006 the HSE's Railway Inspectorate was transferred to the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR). Inspectors from the ORR have been in discussion with OHSU regarding safety controls at railway crossings on University land and during 2007 the University will be visited by the Railway Inspectorate in order to assess and advise on conditions and protocols on-site.

- North West Wales Occupational Health and Safety Group (NWWOHSG)

The OHSU continues to act as 'Secretariat and Host' to the NWWOHSG. This is a voluntary commitment to the distribution and networking of health and safety information and good practice amongst employers across North Wales. As part of this commitment the OHSU hosts and arranges up to ten Seminars each year for local employers on various themes in the area of health and safety management and staff welfare.

The NWWOHSG has approximately 80 separate organizational and individual members; including major public and private sector employers and small and medium sized employers.

- The Institution of Safety and Health (IOSH)

The election of the Assistant Safety Adviser, Lisa Fowlie, to the role of President is IOSH<sup>3</sup> is a significant honour and her role not only includes 'championing' health and safety across the UK but also addressing conferences in distant locations, such as Hong Kong, Dubai and Singapore, and meeting with Government Ministers.

IOSH is Europe's leading body for health and safety professionals and have over 30,000 members worldwide, including over 10,000 Chartered Safety and Health Practitioners.

The Institution was founded in 1945 and is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that sets professional standards, supports and develops members and provides authoritative advice and guidance on health and safety issues.

<sup>3</sup> see [www.iosh.co.uk](http://www.iosh.co.uk) for further information on the Institution



### 3 SPECIFIC TOPICS & ISSUES

This Section provides information on key University policies and documents and offers observations on how certain key hazards are being managed at the institution.

#### 3.1 THE UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

On the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006 the Vice-Chancellor and the Chair of the University Council signed the revised University Health and Safety Policy (H&SP) following its approval by Council. The Policy came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006.

The H&SP reflects the University's academic and task-group management structure and describes the University's commitments and expectations with regards to health, safety and welfare of staff, students and others affected by its activities; such as:

- a commitment to attainment, adoption and promotion of good practice in all aspects of health and safety; and,
- the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and healthy living and working environment for staff and students.

Importantly, the Policy states that *“health and safety controls are about the management of risk and not necessarily about the elimination of risk altogether. Health and safety controls are in place at the University in order to enable activities to be undertaken in a reasonable and safe manner and are not established to prevent activities just because an element of risk exists.”*

In addition to stating the main objectives the H&SP also describes the organisational structure for health and safety and the responsibility and duties of:

- the University Council;
- the Vice-Chancellor;
- the Executive, Task-Groups and other Committees and similar bodies;
- the Safety Executive Task Group;
- Heads of Colleges and Departments;
- the Health and Safety Committee and its Sub-Committees;
- the Occupational Health and Safety Unit; and,
- each member of staff, student and each visitor and contractor.

The H&SP will be reviewed annually by the Health and Safety Committee.

#### 3.2 THE COLLEGE STRUCTURE

The formation of Colleges has offered an opportunity to refresh and revitalise health and safety management within academic Schools. To assist this the former Head of OHSU, David Hague, has been employed on a part-time (fixed-term) basis in the role of College Health and Safety Support Officer. The Support Officer has a remit of working with new Colleges in developing tailored health and safety policies and systems.

It is anticipated that by the start of the next academic year all Colleges will be operating distinct health and safety policies that complement the University H&SP and their own management systems.

### 3.3 CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

A specific University-level Health and Safety Risk Assessment has been produced by the OHSU. This assessment involved identifying hazards/dangers and issues that affect the University as a whole, assessing the current level of good practice and safety procedures and identifying what further actions will be required to bring each identified issue to an acceptable level of safety and moral and legal compliance.

Subjects assessed directly by the Corporate Risk Assessment include:

- ASBESTOS CONTROLS
- ASSOCIATED COMPANIES
- ASTHMA – OCCUPATIONAL
- CHILDREN ON UWB PROPERTY
- CONTRACTOR CONTROL
- CENTRAL ACCOMMODATION
- DISABLED – EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
- EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
- ELECTRICAL – INSTALLATIONS
- ELECTRICAL – HIDDEN SERVICES
- ELECTRICAL – APPLIANCES
- EQUIPMENT & MACHINERY
- EXTRACTION SYSTEMS
- FALLS FROM HEIGHTS
- FIELD WORK
- FIRE SAFETY (INCL ARSON)
- FIRST AID PROVISION
- GAS SAFETY
- GLAZING
- HOME WORKING
- JOINT-USE BUILDINGS (SHARED)
- LIFTING EQUIPMENT
- LIGHTING – EXTERNAL
- LONE WORKING
- MANAGEMENT OF RISK – UNIVERSITY
- MANAGEMENT OF RISK – DEPT/COLLEGE
- MUSCULOSKELETAL HAZARDS
- NEW AND EXPECT' MOTHERS
- NOISE
- OVERSEAS WORKING
- PERSONAL LIABILITIES
- PRESSURE SYSTEMS
- PRESSURE RECEPTACLES
- PURCHASING CONTROLS
- RISK ASSESSMENTS (GENERAL)
- SLIPS, TRIPS, FALLS
- STAFF WORKING AWAY (UK)
- STRESS
- STUDENT PLACEMENT (UK)
- STUDENT UNION ACTIVITIES
- SUBSTANCES – HAZARDOUS
- TERRORIST MATERIALS
- TRAINING AND INFORMATION
- VIBRATION
- VIOLENCE TO STAFF
- VISITING ACADEMICS
- WATER SAFETY – LEGIONELLA
- WORKPLACE TRANSPORT (PEDESTRIAN AND DRIVER SAFETY)
- WORK EXPERIENCE AT UWB
- IMMINENT LEGISLATION

In addition to the above topics a number of far more detailed assessments on matters such as Ionising Radiations, Laser Safety, Genetic Modification, Student Accommodation and certain areas of Occupational Health have or will be undertaken.

The OHSU is currently drawing up an action plan and assigning a member of staff to oversee the implementation of each action point. Those Departments and Colleges/Schools that have individually and/or collectively been identified within the assessment will be advised of recommended actions, as required.

The Safety Executive Task Group will continue to generally oversee the Assessment and action taken and day-to-day duties will remain within the remit of OHSU.

Note: the Corporate Risk Assessment is not a replacement for individual Risk Assessments that are required within all Colleges and Service Departments.

### **3.4 UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY**

The need for a clear strategy and direction for health and safety and health and safety management has been evident for some time, but due to staffing and workload difficulties at the OHSU its development has not been possible in 2006. However, it is likely that a Health and Safety Strategy will be agreed in 2007.

It is anticipated that the Strategy will not only consider and reflect national drivers<sup>4</sup> but also those issues identified by the Corporate Health and Safety Risk Assessment and the challenges posed by the University strategic objectives and aspirations.

It is also anticipated that the Strategy will assist in or enable the University to press ahead, at some future time, with achieving the Welsh Assembly Government's Corporate Health Standard or a similar externally audited benchmark.

### **3.5 STRESS MANAGEMENT**

During 2006 the OHSU produced and distributed a staff (stress) questionnaire to each member of staff at the University. The purpose of this questionnaire was to help identify workplace 'stressors' and to indicate the stress levels amongst staff in order to assess risk to UWB employees and to the University corporately.

Over 2,400 questionnaires were distributed to staff (part and full time staff) and approximately 45% completed questionnaires were returned. This return rate is very impressive and adds a high level of reliability to the survey results.

The outlined results, University-wide, were collated and have been presented and consulted upon with staff representatives and University management. Following this a more detailed assessment was undertaken of the survey results, this for each staff group, school, department, age group etc. and a searchable database produced by IT Services.

In order to progress the production of usable and informative reports for both Heads of Schools/Departments and the University as a whole a further qualitative assessment will be undertaken early-mid 2007. It is anticipated that a full set of survey results will be available by summer 2007 and an action plan produced soon after.

### **3.6 ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT**

During 2006/07 the Estates & Facilities Department commissioned a full re-survey of the University estate to identify asbestos containing materials and to assess the risks. In conjunction to this re-survey an external review of the University's and Estates & Facilities Department's Management Systems for asbestos controls is also being undertaken.

Upon completion of the re-survey and management review a revision of University procedures will be undertaken and an action plan for the safe removal and/or management of asbestos will be agreed. Any revision to the current University procedure will be considered by the Health and Safety Committee prior to approval and implementation.

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<sup>4</sup> in particular, Revitalising Health and Safety (Health and Safety Commission) and Securing Health Together (Various)

### **3.7 FIRE SAFETY AND FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT**

During 2006 a significant new item of Fire Safety legislation was introduced in the UK; The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Order effectively removes an assortment of fire related legislation and much of the peculiarities associated with these.

As a result of the Reform Order the University will no longer require any Fire Certification for its buildings [there were approximately 10 fire certificates previously at UWB] and for the first time will now mainly operate under a single item of fire safety legislation.

It is anticipated that the introduction of the Reform Order will not increase the financial or administrative load upon the University; significantly because the majority of the requirements of this Order were already implemented at UWB.

Revised Fire Risk Assessments for the University buildings will be produced in 2007 through the Estates & Facilities Department. Departmental and School risk assessments will continue to consider fire risks which they create or manage. Also in 2007 it is anticipated a new University standard and policy on fire safety will be introduced.

### **3.8 CONTINGENCY MANAGEMENT (INCL PANDEMIC FLU)**

The Registrar's Office continues to lead on matters of contingency and emergency planning and to aid it each School and Department have been requested to produce contingency plans for such things as loss of building due to fire or flood, or loss of power supply, etc.

The Crisis Management Advisory Group, which reports to the Risk Management Task Group, is currently assessing and developing guidance on pandemic flu; such guidance may also be tailored in the future for other ill-health issues affecting the wider community.

## 4. STATISTICS

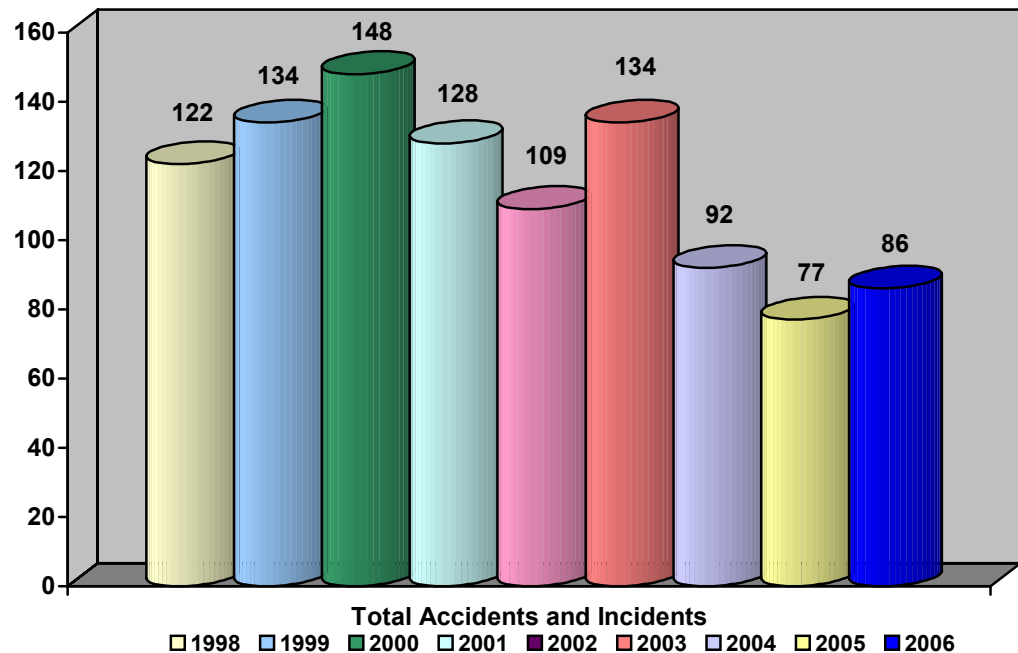
Within this Section annual statistics are provided for Accidents & Incidents, Staff Sickness Absence, Staff Health and Safety Training and Fires & Fire Alarm Activations. The Statistics Section of the Annual Report will be enhanced in the coming years to include College/Department health and safety activity and benchmarked work of the OHSU.

### 4.1 ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

#### 4.1.1 General

The total number of accident and incidents reported to the OHSU in 2006 was slightly up on 2005, numbering 86 in total<sup>5</sup>.

UWB Accident/Incident Totals 1998 - 2006



As shown in the above graph, the total recorded accident/incident rate for 2006 shows a slight increase on 2005. However, it is noted the 2006 statistics do show a relatively low recorded accident rate when it is considered there are over 10,000 staff and students at the institution.

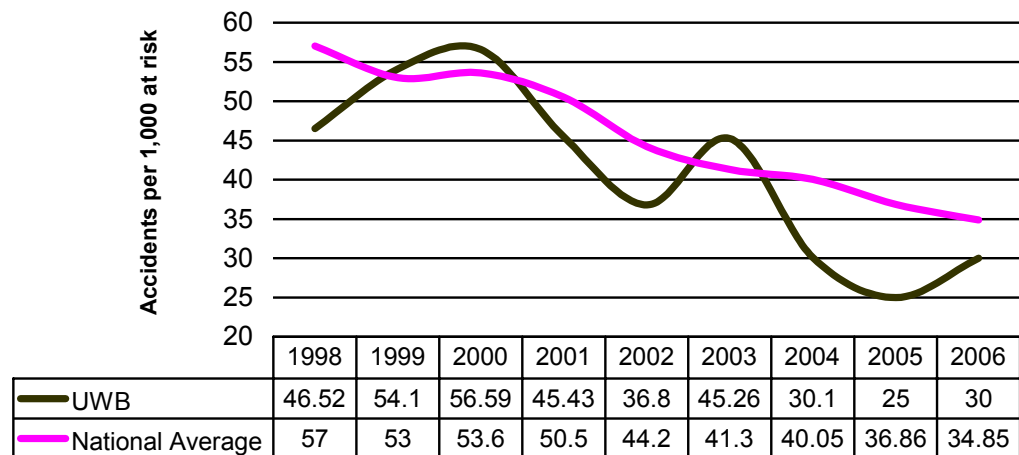
To aid national comparison and to form a clearer picture of accident rates over many years the total number of recorded accidents is calculated on a 1,000 at risk basis; ie, the total number of staff accidents is divided by the number of staff employed to give a steady comparable statistic.

When considering the 'at risk' calculation the 2006 accident statistics indicate a staff recorded accident ratio of 30 accidents per 1,000 members of staff employed. This

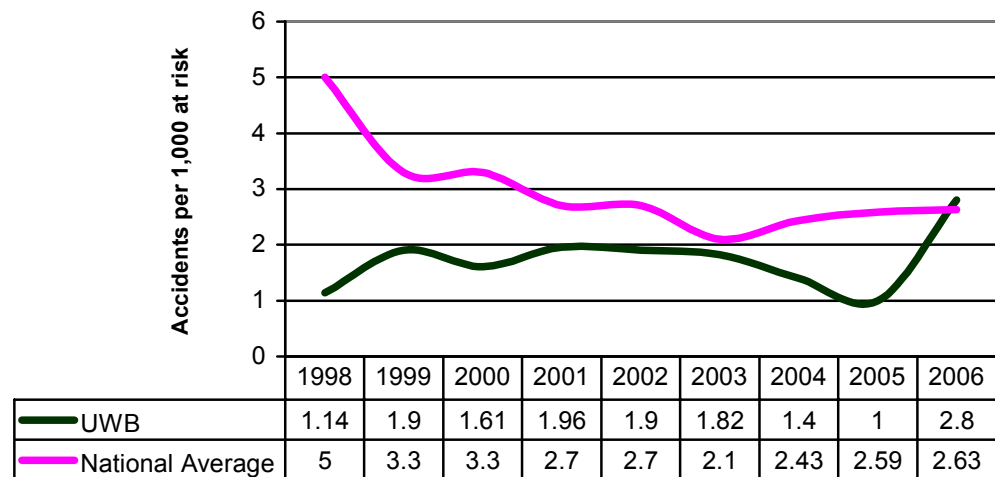
<sup>5</sup> A further 28 reports were also received for sporting injuries, 42 potentially dangerous-conditions were reported and 15 medical incidents were also reported (these for such things as 'fainting' and 'epileptic fits'). These accidents and incidents are not recorded in the 'total' statistics due to the USHA reporting methodology.

compares favourably with the national University Sector average of 34.85 'actual' injuries to members of staff per 1,000 at risk<sup>6</sup>.

#### National and UWB accident/incident rate averaged per 1000 **staff** at risk



#### National and UWB accident/incident rate averaged per 1000 **students** at risk



A student accident ratio of 2.8 accidents per 1,000 students in 2006 shows a distinct increase in recorded accidents/incidents at UWB; especially when compared to both previous years and national average of 2.63 accidents per 1,000 students. However, this equates to an actual rise of only **9** additional accident reports to OHSU of student accidents compared to 2005 and therefore it is considered inappropriate at this stage to place too much emphasis on the increase.

The reporting of student accidents will continue to be promoted vigorously by OHSU to help identify the true risk level.

<sup>6</sup> It is noted that UWB statistics include all reported accidents whether an injury occurred or not – this is in line with HSE reporting expectations – and a number of other institutions report 'injury' only accidents.

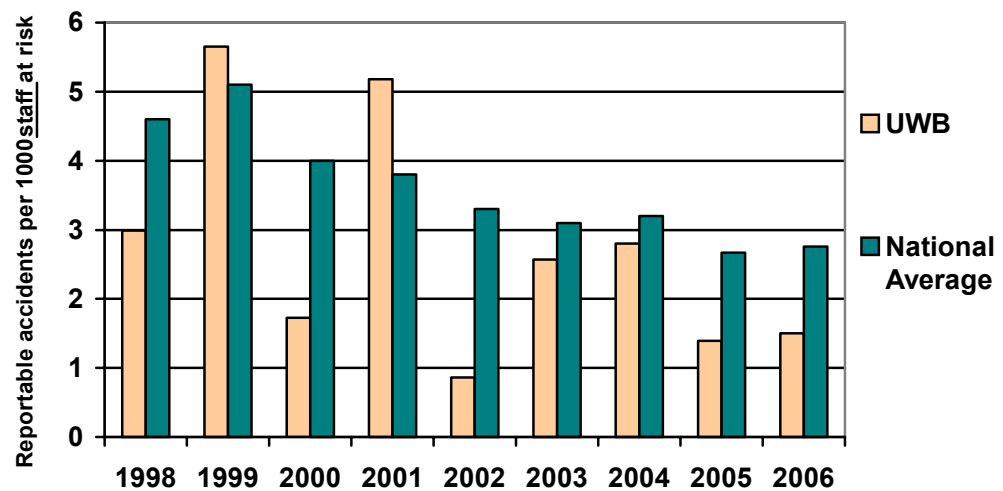
#### 4.1.2 Reportable Accidents<sup>7</sup>

The total number of Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Reportable Accidents and Incidents for 2006 was 9; this was up significantly on the 4 reportable accidents in 2005.

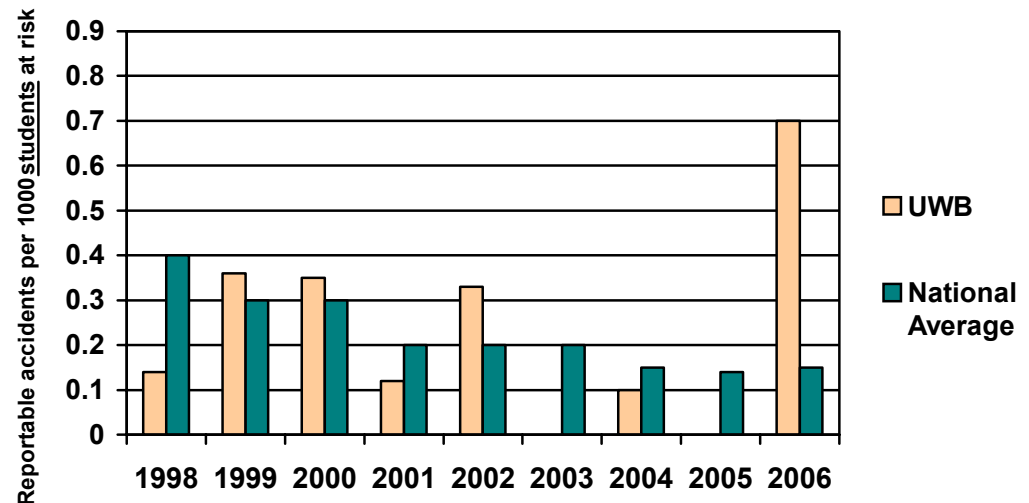
In 2006 there were a total of 3 'reportable' accidents to members of staff, this compares favourably to the 5 'reportable' staff accidents which occurred to staff in 2005. However, there was a noteworthy increase in the number of 'reportable' accidents to students in 2006 as in 2005 there were no reportable accidents to a student but in 2006 there were 6.

For statistical purposes the reportable accident ratios are provided as a calculation of 1,000 persons (staff, students) at risk.

Reportable (RIDDOR) **Staff** Accidents and Incidents per 1,000 at risk



Reportable (RIDDOR) **Student** Accidents and Incidents per 1,000 at risk



<sup>7</sup> Reportable accidents relates to those accidents and incidents which must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Such accidents and incidents normally involve injury, time off work as a result of an accident and diseases and conditions associated with work.

Most significantly 24% of all student accident reports received by the OHSU in 2006 ended-up as HSE reportable accidents. This is a considerable ratio when compared to the staff ratio of around 5% of total accidents being reportable to the HSE.

The student accident ratio of 24% 'reportable' may confirm an existing concern regarding the perceived lack of reporting of accidents by students at the University. This assumption however is still difficult to quantify or confirm as the number of accidents reports for students [received by OHSU] in 2006 was only 25, compared to the 2005 reportable accident rate of zero from 10 accident reports received.

Of the 6 reportable accidents to students in 2006, one was a serious incident involving a *fall from height* that resulted in a head injury; all others (5) were reported to the HSE as a result of students attending the Hospital A&E department for medical assessment or treatment (mainly as a precaution).

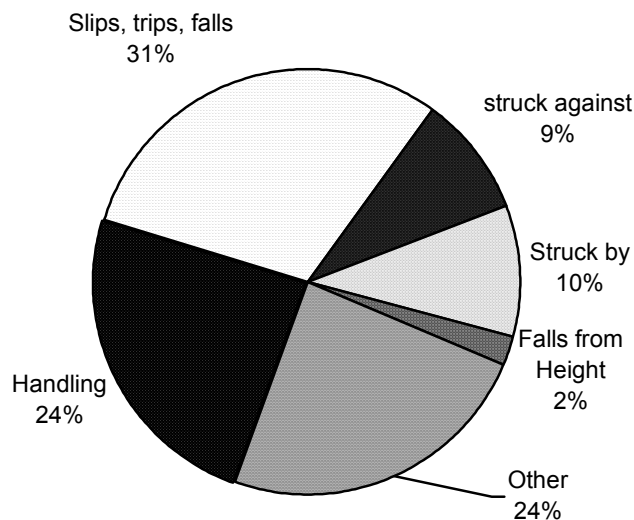
From the statistics available it would appear UWB reported a greater proportion of its student accidents to the HSE than other universities in 2006. This may reflect a tendency at UWB to report all student 'hospital visits'. Indeed this year, UWB rate of HSE reporting [per 1000 students at risk] is 0.7 whereas the national average is only 0.15 reportable accidents per 1,000 students. It should be remembered however that in 2005 no student accidents were reported.

The legislation regarding HSE reporting for hospital visits of non-employees (students) is not entirely clear and many institutions do not necessarily report incidents which are routinely reported at UWB. In order to help resolve this perceived reporting difficulty the University Safety and Health Association (USHA) is to assess current reporting practices and offer advice to the HE sector.

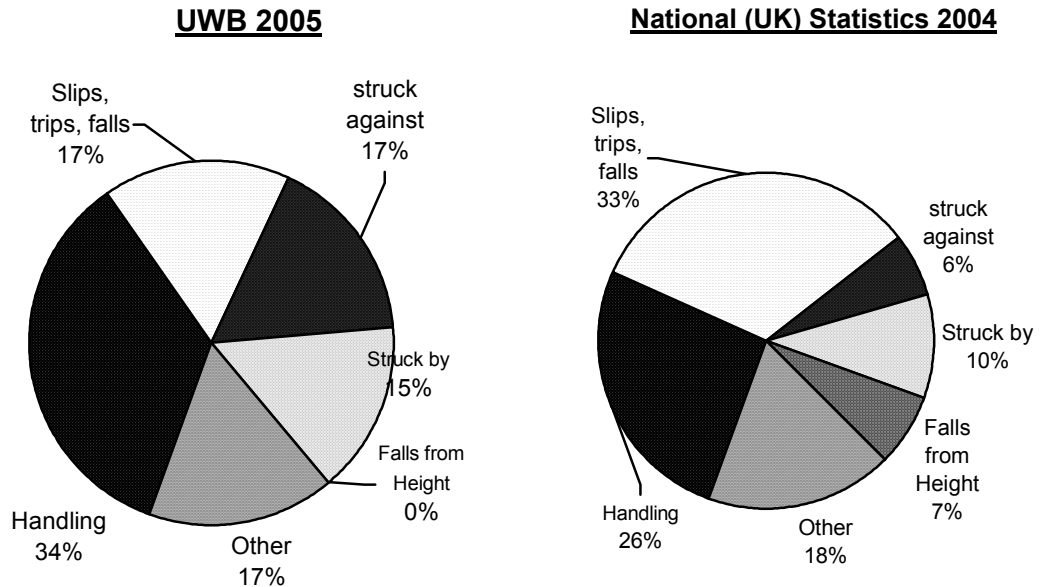
#### 4.1.3 Accident Causations

To understand why accidents occur it is important to identify causations. At UWB 31% of accidents were due to slips, trips or falls on level ground or on stairs, this compares to a national average in 2004 of 33%. However, at UWB the figure of 33% represents a 16% increase on 2005.

#### University of Wales, Bangor 2006







#### 4.2 STAFF SICKNESS ABSENCE<sup>8</sup>

This Section provides statistical information on sickness absence and trends in sickness recorded at the University over a three year period. Commentary is not provided on the statistics or their implications, however where possible National comparators are included.

It is anticipated that greater detail and interpretation of sickness absence data together with greater HE comparators will be available in future Annual Report.

- Sickness Reporting Requirements

The University requires every member of staff to report sickness absence of a day or more through completing a Self-Certificate or forwarding a Doctor's Certificate. All absence reports (sick notes) are returned to the OHSU and are entered onto its Occupational Health Database and statistical information is then transferred to the Finance Department (wages) and Human Resources (absence monitoring).

During the year 1,625 sickness absence reports were received and entered on the Occupational Health database, 80% of these were self-certification Reports.

- Overall Sickness Absence Statistics

Sickness absence totals for the last three years are as follows:

Staff Sickness Absence Totals			
Year	2004	2005	2006
Calendar Days	17,560	14,875	15,742
Working Days Lost	13,247	11,305	11,919

<sup>8</sup> It is noted that direct work-related sickness absence statistics are not available as such are difficult to prove and therefore produce.

Two-thirds of employees **did not** take a single day [reported] sickness absence in 2006.

- Adjusted Staff Sickness Absence rates

To allow for a greater clarity, the total sickness absence numbers are adjusted to reflect the average number of employees at the University during that year; this provides a much clearer indicator as staffing levels fluctuate. Absenteeism rates are averaged<sup>9</sup> per employee/year:

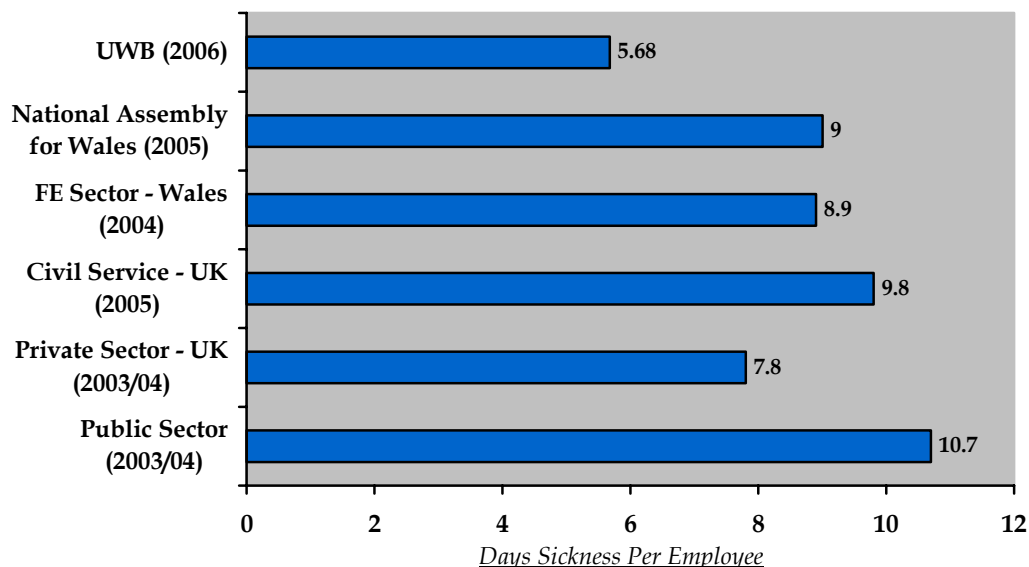
Sickness Rate Per Employee/year and as % of Working Days Lost			
Year	2004	2005	2006
Calendar Days	7.63	6.79	7.5
Working Days Lost	5.76 (2.61%)	5.14 (2.32%)	5.68 (2.57%)

- National Comparators

There are presently no national sickness absence statistics available for the University sector therefore comparators are drawn from the UK Civil Service<sup>10</sup>, the National Assembly for Wales, averaged Public and Private (all employer sizes) Sectors<sup>11</sup> and the Further Education (FE) Sector in Wales<sup>12</sup> (2004) data. Data for 2006 is not yet available nationally.

National Sickness Absence data is produced as ‘working days lost’ and not as ‘days unable to work’ – i.e. Calendar Days.

**National Comparisons (Days Per Employee/Year)**



Note: There is a HE/FE Sector perception that under reporting of sickness absence is common place and, if correct, this factor will have an impact on the UWB and FE data.

<sup>9</sup> Based on averaged contracted staffing levels of 2,300 (in 2004), 2,200 (in 2005) and 2,100 (in 2006) employees working an averaged 221 day year.

<sup>10</sup> Analysis of Sickness Absence in Civil Service 2005 – RED Scientific Ltd

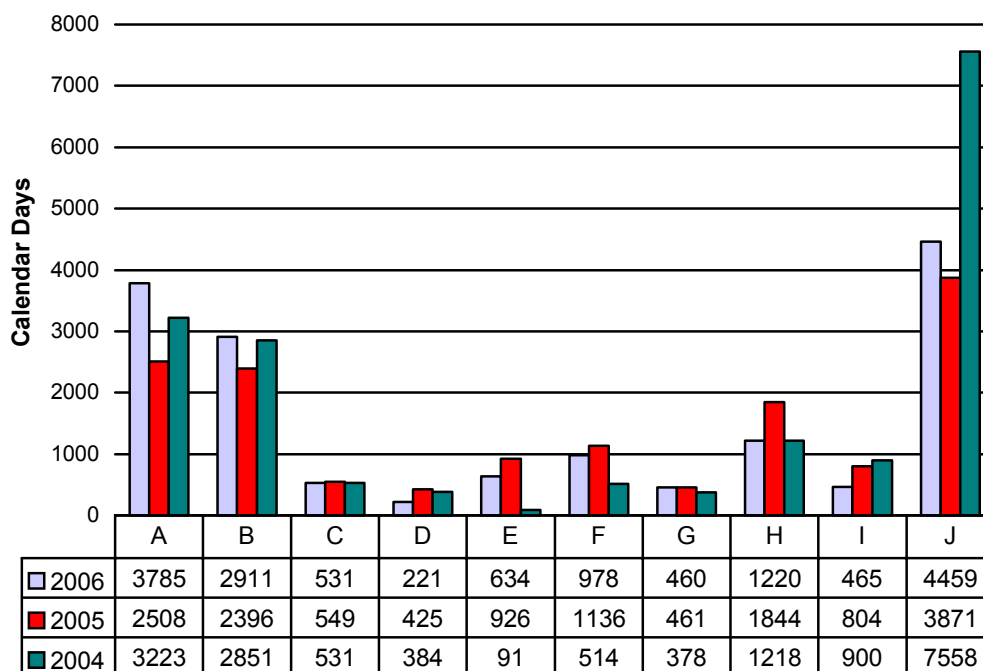
<sup>11</sup> Based on CIPD Employee Absence Survey Report

<sup>12</sup> Wales Audit Office Report, May 2005

• Sickness Absence Causation

The Sickness absence records are grouped into 10 main categories. Below are total calendar days absence for each category:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Possible Stress related	Musculo-skeletal	Infectious Conditions	Headaches & Other Neurological	Urinary, Gynaecological & Pregnancy	Stomach, Liver, Kidney & Digestion	Heart, Blood press & Circulation	Cold, Flu, Chest and respiratory	Eye, Ear, Nose & Mouth	Others



○ Possible Stress Related Absence Data

The data for 2006 show that 79 (4%) UWB employees were off work due to possible stress related conditions and this group accounted for 22.96% of the total [working days] absence.

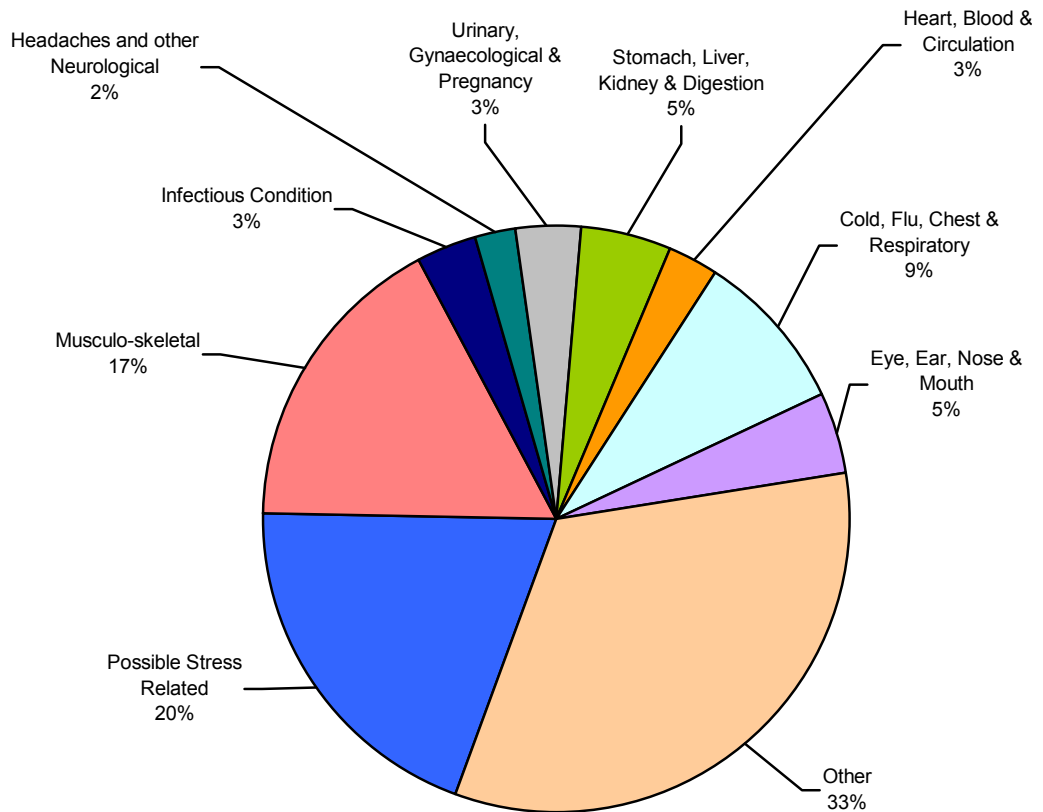
A direct comparison with other institutions for stress absence rates is traditionally very difficult due to inconsistent reporting and recording of data – as ‘stress’ it self is not a medical condition. At UWB the ‘possible stress related’ category includes anxiety, bereavement, debility, depression, exhaustion and nervous debility and are not necessarily work-related conditions.

○ Musculoskeletal Conditions Related Absence Data

188 (9%) members of staff reported an absence due to musculoskeletal conditions; including, neck, back and wrist problems, rheumatism, arthritis, frozen shoulders and broken limbs.

- Combined (2004-06) Sickness Causation as a Percentage

To show an average breakdown of sickness absence (per condition-grouping) statistics for 2004, 2005 and 2006 are combined as follows:



- Long-Term Absence

57.22% of the total reported sickness absences for 2006 were for absences for periods greater than 21 days; i.e. long term absence.

- Reportable Medical Conditions

There were two separate medical conditions reported<sup>13</sup> to the HSE in 2006; both of these related to possible Work-Related Upper Limb Disorders that can be associated with keyboard or repetitive type work.

### Footnote

It is anticipated that greater detail will be available on sickness absence trends in future Reports, complemented by financial implications (costs) of sickness absence. It is also envisaged that data will be presented, in line with national reporting, in age ranges, grades (types) of employment and gender.

<sup>13</sup> As per RIDDOR: Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Conditions Regulations

### 4.3 STAFF HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

- General

The Occupational Health and Safety Unit has provided both scheduled and ad-hoc courses to University members of staff and individual Schools and Departments. Courses, Training sessions and Briefings are provided by OHSU staff and external specialists, as appropriate.

- Developments

In response to the last OHSU PIB<sup>14</sup> (2006) exercise the training remit was altered to include 'income generation' and this was reflected in the higher number of IOSH 4 day courses being scheduled for non-UWB organisations.

There has been a significant improvement in attendance rates when presenting courses 'on demand' to Schools and Departments or scheduling and marketing single courses for booking rather than scheduling a full programme at the beginning of each year / term.

- Summary and Statistics

In general it is felt key health and safety courses are presently being well attended but it should be noted that there is currently no suitable audit trail for ensuring all new members of staff attend the two compulsory courses; Staff Induction and Display Screen Equipment (DSE) User.

With the changes in the University structure a review of training requirements (and also communication links) for School/Department Safety Co-ordinators will be undertaken, as no dedicated courses were provided in 2006 for this crucial staff group.

During the year over 680 members of staff attended Health and Safety Training sessions. Staff Training included:

- 194 staff on Health and Safety Inductions for new employees
- 83 staff attended tailored Departmental H&S general courses
- 40 staff attended tailored Risk Assessment courses
- 18 members of staff and Student Volunteers attended IOSH courses
- 44 members of staff attended the 4-day First Aid Course
- 30 staff members attended a Fire Safety course
- 27 members of research staff attended a Radiation safety course
- 30 members of staff attended the Heads of Department/School/College H&S Law Briefing

- Future Courses

It is anticipated that 2007 will see a reduction in overall training numbers<sup>15</sup>. However, this trend should reverse towards the latter part of 2007 and on into 2008 as staffing levels at OHSU return to normal and the Health and Safety Strategy is implemented.

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<sup>14</sup> PIB – Priority Incremental Budgeting exercise, which is a formal examination of budgetary requirements of Service Departments at UWB.

<sup>15</sup> Due to temporary reduced staffing levels at OHSU

#### 4.4 FIRES & FIRE ALARM ACTIVATIONS

The annual fire and fire alarm report for the University is presented as a comparative record over a number of years, in accordance with the criteria laid down by the Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA).

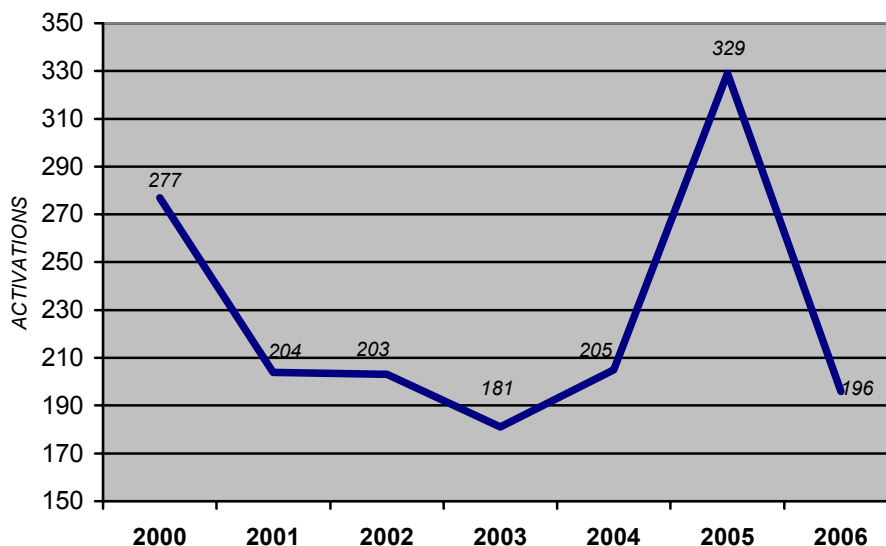
The national (USHA) statistics for 2006 are based on reporting by 84 higher education institutions across the United Kingdom.

In some cases it is difficult to make direct comparisons between national statistics and those produced at the University of Wales, Bangor but they do provide a good indication of the University's performance against national trends.

Note: over a period of years the numbers of student residences managed by Universities has decreased significantly, mainly due to out-sourcing, and therefore the national statistics may have been influenced by the consequential reduction in high risk buildings.

- Fire Alarm Activation Statistics

**UWB Annual Fire Alarm Activation Totals & Trending**



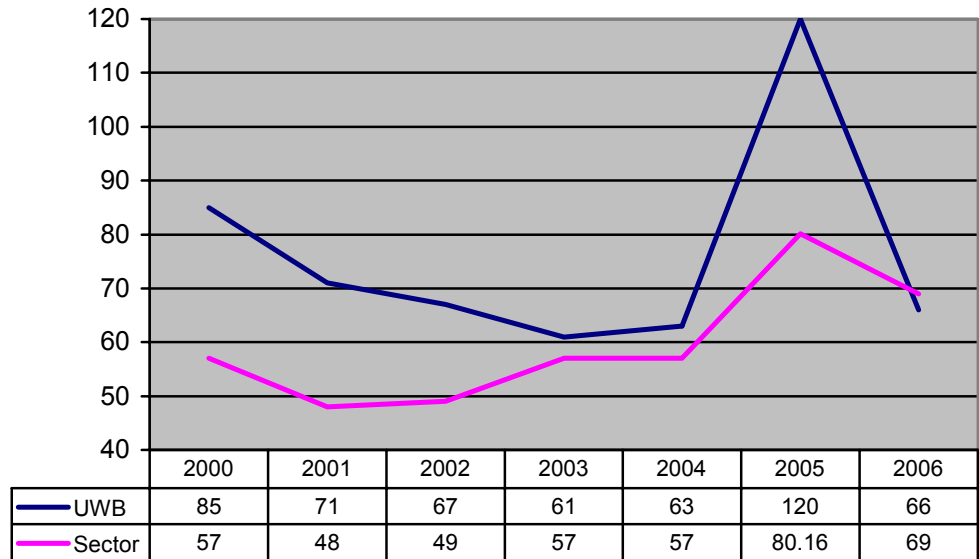
<b>Causation of Fire Alarm Activations at UWB</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
False alarms due to dust etc,	15	18	6	13
False alarms due to systems (or system faults)	78	124	74	59
Alarms due to cooking fumes or steam etc,	85	144	90	75
Malicious operation of the fire alarm	0	34	20	18
False alarms due to 'good intent'	11	6	4	7
Actual fires (whether or not extinguisher used)	7	3	9	8
Other events	0	0	2	1
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>181</b>

A significant reduction in fire alarm activations caused maliciously, through system errors or caused by cooking fumes were noted in 2006.

- National Comparison

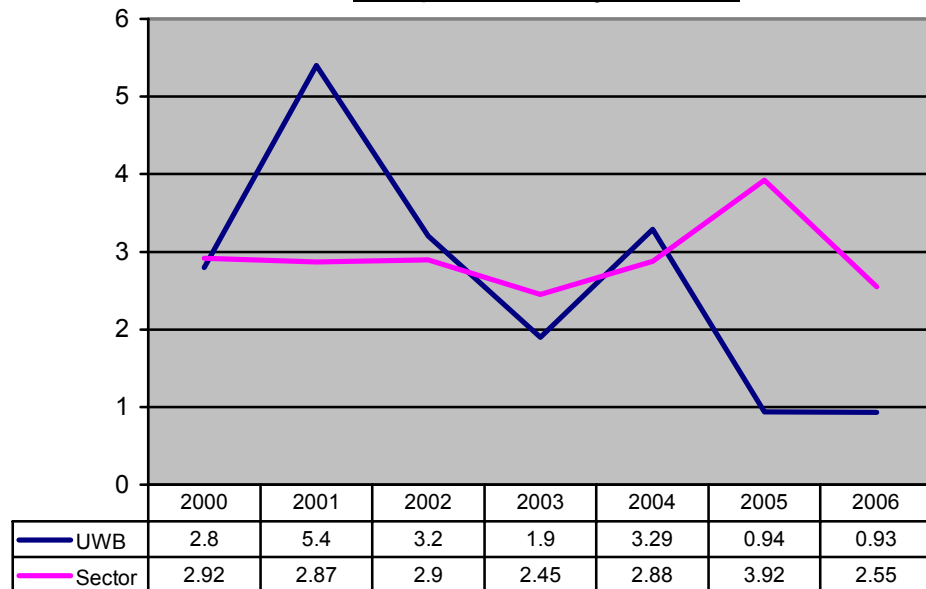
Due to the reporting requirements of USHA, National Statistical comparisons are only possible for University managed **Residential Accommodation** and in order to facilitate a ready comparison, the National and UWB student Residential Accommodation statistics are produced per 1000 study bedrooms<sup>16</sup>.

**Fire Alarm Activations per 1,000 Study Bedrooms**



It is noted that for the first time since statistics were collated UWB had a fire alarm activation rate, within Halls of Residences, lower than the national average.

**Fires per 1,000 Study Bedrooms**



<sup>16</sup> Approximately 2,150 study bedrooms were in occupation/available at UWB in 2006.

- Activation Rates

At UWB Halls of Residences there are approximately 3,762 fire and smoke detectors. When this is compared to the number of non-fire activations of the fire alarm a ratio of 3 'false alarms' per 100 detectors is attained. This compares favourably to the national sector ratio of 4.4 activations per 100 detectors.

- Other Information

Across the University sector as a whole<sup>17</sup>:

- 507 fires<sup>18</sup> were reported within residential accommodation, 441 of these were in kitchens and 6 injuries<sup>19</sup> resulted.
- The Fire & Rescue Services attended the premises of those Universities surveyed (84) on a total of 7,718 occasions during 2006. Down from the 8,895 attendances in 2005.
- There were four fires at the University of Wales, Bangor in 2006; two at halls of residence and two within academic buildings. Both fires within academic buildings were in chemical laboratories and required the use of an extinguisher.
- For the first time since UWB statistics were collated there were no malicious activations of the fire alarm within any University building; however the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service still attended on 196 separate occasions in response to automatic fire alarm activations.

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<sup>17</sup> As per the 84 respondents to the national HE fire survey 2006

<sup>18</sup> Fires are defined as 'fires requiring the use of an extinguisher or more to put out/extinguish'.

<sup>19</sup> Injuries are defined as 'injuries requiring hospital treatment'.



## 5. PLANNED WORK

- Strategic Plan

The Safety Executive Task Group and the OHSU will seek to produce and agree a structured and goal setting Strategic Plan for health and safety at the University.

- Benchmarking and Performance Criteria

To complement the development of a Strategic Plan the OHSU will investigate further how to benchmark health and safety internally and with other like institutions.

The Corporate Health and Safety Risk Assessment is to be enhanced and up-dated periodically and will also be used as an internal benchmark

- Auditing and Monitoring

A new system of planned and systematic audits of Colleges, Schools, Departments and Identified Hazard Groups (such as chemical safety, radiation, manual handling) is to be developed so that all sections of the University will be audited to identify strengths, weaknesses and their support requirements.

- Staff Health and Well-being

Through the appointment of a Nurse Practitioner in Occupational Health and enhanced commitments to staff well-being it is anticipated that strategies and programmes will be developed over a number of years to promote and enhance staff health and well-being.

- Guidance and Publications

There is a desire to refresh and simplify all central health and safety policies and guidance to make it easier to understand and implement standards. These will be supplemented with practical and user-friendly advice on how to not only comply with legislative requirements but also how to develop and improve.

Specific documents that will be produced or amended over the next year should include revised guidance on undertaking fieldwork and field-trips safely, the provision of first aid, overseas travel advice, fire safety, road and vehicle safety and procedures for arranging and monitoring work placements of students.

It is also anticipated that the Health and Safety Website will be re-designed to provide more user-friendly and useful information for managers, staff and students.

- College, School and Departmental Contact

The level of direct and personal contacts between members of the OHSU should improve significantly over coming years as staffing levels return to pre-2006 levels. Contact will also increase through the introduction of scheduled auditing programmes.

## 5. COMMENTARY ON THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

The introduction of a goal setting Health and Safety Strategy will bring with it many challenges; significantly in providing resources to undertake audits, fulfil the monitoring commitments and in realizing an attitude of continual improvement. Influencing and encouraging Colleges, Schools and Departments to adopt, promote and further enhance their own health and safety systems will be a challenging task, as each has its own staffing and financial limitations and all have competing calls on what are sometimes limited resources.

Generally there is a heightened level of expectation for health, safety and well-being, during all facets of peoples lives. Indeed, the boundaries of what 'health and safety' actually '*means and is*' are becoming increasingly unclear. Certainly, the old-fashioned view of what 'health and safety is' is no longer appropriate (as 'clip-boards' are rarely seen!). There does seem to be a greater acceptance and recognition that private and work lives are entwined and may affect one another greatly, therefore influencing behaviour at home and at work through education and knowledge can be crucial.

The opportunity this ever-developing outlook offers will be challenging but equally exciting. Especially as it presents an opportunity to look 'holistically' at staff and student safety and encourages the promotion of 'well-being' at and away from the workplace.

The University also plays a key role in improving and promoting health and safety beyond its own boundaries especially through instilling a level of health and safety understanding and awareness into the mindset of students. Students who will eventually move into all areas of employment and activity across the world and who may indeed take with them the health and safety philosophy they gained here.

On the more physical side to health and safety another significant opportunity and challenge lay ahead, the development and implementation of the new University Estate Strategy. The Estate Strategy promises to be radical and exciting and will bring with it many safety challenges, in securing the health and safety of people during large-scale construction work and in designing buildings which safeguard and enhance the well-being and safety of the user.

Of course, whilst new buildings are being constructed the rest of the estate must be managed and maintained and in many cases significant improvement will be required to ensure their continued suitability and safety. This will cost many hundreds of thousands of pounds, and will have to be prioritised alongside other expenditure also crucial to the University's future – this is a delicate balancing act that must be carefully managed.

Finally, another increasing problem nationally is the consequences of an ageing workforce leaving their long-term employment and taking with them years of knowledge and information. If this situation is not managed carefully crucial information may be lost and employers may be prone to repeating mistakes that have occurred in the past. The importance of disseminating and documenting crucial health, safety and practical information cannot be over-emphasised and Schools and Departments must be encouraged to plan for retirements and unexpected absence of key staff.

**End.**