



## **CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH) POLICY**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Purpose of Issue / Description of Change</b>	<b>Equality Impact Assessment Completed</b>
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	Reviewed and approved by the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Task Group	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2020

<b>Policy Officer</b>	<b>Senior Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Date</b>
Head of Health and Safety	University Secretary	Health & Safety Committee	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2017

This Policy will be reviewed in 2025

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every year, thousands of workers become ill due to exposure to hazardous substances in their workplace. Often illnesses can lead to chronic, life changing conditions such as dermatitis.

Due to the wide range of activities undertaken in a University environment, it is not only staff who could be at risk of exposure to a hazardous substance used during their work, but also students using substances during their teaching / research. In addition, others visiting the University, or using University premises as a place of work e.g. contractors, could be exposed due to indirect contact with a hazardous substance.

All chemical and hazardous substance use and creation must, in addition to this Policy, consider the potential for an adverse environmental impact, and applicable environmental legislation.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Bangor University, so far as is reasonably practicable, but in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and good practice, to ensure the health and safety of staff, students, and visitors to the University.

### The Policy applies to:

- Each College and Professional Service.
- All staff and students handling hazardous substances as part of a College, School / Professional Service activity.
- University appointed contractors using or generating hazardous substances on University premises or on University land.

### The Policy does not apply to:

- Personal products of a student in a University Hall of Residence.

## 3. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

In addition to the general duties of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, Colleges, Schools and Services, have a specific obligation under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, to assess the risks associated with the use of hazardous substances (as defined by the Regulations) and adopt appropriate precautions to eliminate and / or control exposure.

Specific duties are also placed on the University to facilitate health surveillance and monitoring of members of staff whose health may be impacted through exposure to chemicals listed in Schedule 6 of the COSHH Regulations and by other substances with a similar potential, and through the requirements of Regulation 6 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

In addition, hazardous substances must be used and disposed of in accordance with the requirements of relevant environmental legislation, where applicable.

## 4. DEFINITIONS / TERMINOLOGY

- COSHH: Control of Substances Hazardous to Health. COSHH covers substances that are hazardous to health. Substances take many forms: chemicals, products containing chemicals, fumes, dusts, vapours, mists, nanotechnology, gases and asphyxiating gases and biological agents (germs) (if the packaging has any relevant hazard symbols it is classed as a hazardous substance).
- Hazard: In relation to a substance, means the intrinsic property of that substance which has the potential to cause harm to the health of a person.

- Substance: A natural or artificial substance (or material) whether in solid or liquid form or in the form of a gas or vapour (including micro-organisms).
- Substance Hazardous to Health: A substance (including a preparation) which is:
  - a. Listed in Table 3.2 of part 3 of Annex VI of the Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulation and described as very toxic, toxic, harmful, carcinogen, corrosive or irritant.
  - b. Health and Safety Executive has approved a Workplace Exposure Limit for.
  - c. Biological agent.
  - d. Dust of any kind, except dust which is a substance within paragraph (a) or (b) above, when present at a concentration in air equal to or greater than – (i) 10 mg/m<sup>3</sup>, as a time-weighted average over an 8-hour period, of inhalable dust; or (ii) 4 mg/m<sup>3</sup>, as a time-weighted average over an 8-hour period, of respirable dust.
  - e. Not being a substance as detailed (a) to (d) but because of the way it is used or is present in the workplace creates a risk to health.

## **5. UNIVERSITY DUTIES**

The University has a duty to ensure no harm occurs because of the use of hazardous substances as part of a University activity. Day to day responsibility for the management of hazardous substances is delegated to each Dean of College and Directors of Professional Services for their areas of activity. To support this, the University shall:

- Ensure appropriate documented management controls are in place to promote the elimination of hazardous substances, or if needed, ensure risks associated with their use are controlled to prevent harm.
- Provide or facilitate health surveillance to monitor members of staff and applicable PhD/Research students whose health may be impacted through exposure to relevant hazardous substances.

## **6. DUTIES OF COLLEGES AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

This Policy establishes the fundamental principles for managing the risks associated with the use of hazardous substances as part of a College / School / Service activity.

Each Dean of College, Head of School and Director of Professional Service must ensure the following management arrangements; to eliminate the use of hazardous substances, or where this is not possible reduce the risks arising from their use, are in place:

- a. Identify activities involving the use or creation of hazardous substances within their area of responsibility.
- b. Assess, through a COSHH Assessment, the risks to the health and safety of anyone affected by the activities, and which considers individual needs where required.
- c. Eliminate or reduce the risks where possible through implementing the hierarchy of risk reduction methods, including elimination or substitution with a safer process or material.
- d. If elimination is not possible, put in place adequate control measures to reduce risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

- e. Ensure hazardous substances, clinical waste, and associated by-products, are disposed of correctly and in accordance with the Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations and other applicable environmental legislation.
- f. As a last resort, provide personal protective equipment (alone or in addition to other control measures) which takes account of individual needs.
- g. Provide suitable and sufficient resources (includes personnel and machinery and equipment) to manage any risks associated with the use of a hazardous substance.
- h. Provide suitable instruction, training and supervision to staff, students and others potentially affected, to make them aware of the risks associated with the substance, including correct disposal, clinical waste and associated by-products, the correct techniques to follow and equipment to use and the action to take in an emergency.
- i. Arrange (if required) for staff and applicable PhD/research students, who routinely work with certain higher-risk hazardous substances, periodic Health Surveillance. Criteria for Health Surveillance requirements are described in the Health Surveillance and Health Monitoring Guidance document.
- j. Ensure equipment and systems provided to control exposure to hazardous substances (e.g. fume cabinets and biological safety cabinets) or which form associated emergency arrangements, are inspected, tested, and maintained as required.
- k. Arrange environmental monitoring to ensure efficacy of equipment and systems, as required.
- l. Ensure Assessments are reviewed if there is a reason to suspect it is no longer valid or there has been a significant change in the hazardous substances work to which it relates.
- m. Ensure accidents and incidents are reported and investigated accordingly, with action taken where possible, to prevent a reoccurrence of the event.
- n. Maintain records as required e.g. Risk / COSHH Assessments, training, inspections, equipment maintenance and servicing.

## **7. DUTIES OF STAFF, STUDENTS AND VISITORS**

All staff and students working with hazardous substances as part of a College / School / Service activity must:

- a. Follow all instruction and training provided to ensure the health, safety, and well-being, of not only themselves when handling a substance (includes correct disposal of substance, clinical waste, and associated by-products), but also others potentially exposed.
- b. Correctly use equipment (including Personal Protective Equipment) and systems provided to minimise risks associated with the use of a substance, including, pre-use checks as required to confirm operability.
- c. Participate in Health Surveillance, as requested.
- d. Inform their Supervisor, Line Manager and H&S Coordinator or directly to Health and Safety immediately of anything, including illnesses or medical conditions, which could affect their ability to work with a substance.
- e. Report any concerns, accidents or incidents to their Supervisor, Line Manager and H&S Coordinator or directly to Health and Safety immediately.

## **8. CONTRACTORS**

Where contractors are engaged by the University, the relevant College or Professional Service must ensure that the contractor, when using or creating hazardous substances, understand their responsibilities and have in place suitable management arrangements to reduce or eliminate risk of harm from their activity. Contractor COSHH Assessments must be shared with the appointing College / Professional Service, as applicable.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Every effort must be made to support individuals, so they are treated equally and to enable them to undertake their tasks in the same way as their peers.

However, in some rare instances, there may be a requirement to treat 'persons with a protected characteristic' differently to safeguard their own health, safety and well-being when using and / or coming into contact with hazardous substances. Any such consideration will be discussed with the individual concerned with reasonable adjustments made where possible.

## **10. FURTHER GUIDANCE**

A range of guidance and information relating to COSHH, chemicals and other hazardous substances, safe laboratory working practices etc are available on the H&S Website: – <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/hss/inflink/infoab.php.en#C>

## **11. REVIEW AND AUDIT PROCEDURES**

Health and Safety, Campus Services may undertake periodic audits or reviews to assess the effectiveness of and compliance with, this Policy.

Colleges / Professional Services must periodically review their own procedures to ensure the requirements of this Policy are implemented, suitable and effective.

The Health, Safety and Emergency Management Task Group will review this Policy in accordance with the agreed Review Schedule, with any significant changes considered by the University Health and Safety Committee.

**End.**