

Work Outside Normal Hours

Policy Statement

Work outside 'normal hours' covers staff and students and in some cases visitors or contractors. This type of work is potentially more dangerous to the persons concerned as many of the support systems only operate during 'normal hours'.

NB: This covers Research, Teaching, Administration and all other work activities undertaken in the University.

Introduction

This supplement has been written as a result of the fire in the Old Library Building in November 2003.

In this document out of hours is deemed to be after a building has been secured at night until the building is reopened on a morning and including weekends, official closure dates and bank holidays. The appendix provides details for individual buildings and is subject to change.

Until normal circumstances most academic buildings on the main campus close at 5pm. After this time there is restricted access to authorised staff and students using either keys or University Smartcards. It is hoped that the use of smartcards will be used more widely in future both as a means of entry and identification. Staff and postgraduates working out of hours must wear their Smartcard and others must have them available upon request.

The principal concerns of the university with regard to working outside normal hours are fire safety and personal safety. The university must have in place proper evacuation procedures that can be verified. There must, in other words, be clear instructions as to what to do in the event of fire, and there must be a consistent mechanism for checking that evacuation is complete save in cases where egress from the building is direct and straightforward.

Also see the Staff Personal Safety and Crime Prevention booklet published by the Security Office.

Out of Hours Lectures

Where these are given out of hours, the person organising the lecture is responsible for ensuring an orderly evacuation of the lecture theatre if necessary. Usually, the responsible person will be the lecturer, who should familiarise him/herself with the emergency exit route. For public lectures, the responsible person will be the one issuing the invitation; (s)he must either attend the lecture or ensure that a nominee is present who is charged with taking responsibility in the event of fire. Under no circumstances should it be assumed that the building porter is in charge; (s)he will have a number of other duties to carry out in the event of fire, and whilst the porter may be in a position to offer assistance in ensuring that an orderly evacuation takes place, the person responsible is the lecturer or lecture organiser.

Out of Hours Examinations

The senior invigilator should act as fire warden, and must familiarise him or herself with the correct emergency exit route before the examination commences.

ISS Cluster rooms or Libraries.

The main university library (the Robinson Library) has made separate arrangements for late working, which are the subject of a separate document.

Unsupervised late working in the Law Library, Language Centre and some Cluster Rooms is permitted by both undergraduates and graduates on the understanding that:

- ◆ adequate advice has been given with respect to personal security. Further assistance is available from the University Security Control Centre and the University Safety Office.
- ◆ adequate secure access arrangements are made (ie. Access is limited to the building and specific parts of the building) and monitoring arrangements such as security staff calling in during their patrols to check individuals Smartcards.
- ◆ the position and layout of the facility affords direct and straightforward egress from the building

Special arrangements may be required to facilitate disabled access/egress out of hours. The Disability Unit will be able to assist in the first instance. This should be part of the individual's Personal Emergency Evaluation Plan (PEEP).

Individual late working, research and student supervision

The conditions for individual late working in schools must be set by individual Heads of School, and will normally be dictated by the perceived hazards and risks associated with particular subjects. In general, these conditions are likely to apply only to staff and post-graduates; the university does not normally permit individual out-of-hours working by undergraduates in laboratories or other common areas of potential risk unless adequate supervision is provided. Only in those circumstances above can undergraduates be permitted to work unsupervised after hours, and then only in carefully defined and low-risk areas. School policies in this area must be explicit, and should conform to the following broad principles:

No person can work late and alone if they are involved in any operations that are hazardous. This should be covered in the risk assessment for the work. Where hazardous operations are undertaken, there must, at the least, be someone within earshot, with adequate arrangements for supervision.

No person can undertake potentially hazardous work until they have been thoroughly trained in the operations required, and these operations have been discussed with the safety policy supplement on lone working.

Schools should ensure that advice on personal security is given to every individual who is likely to work out of hours.

It is recognised that best practice would involve schools in instituting an out-of-hours signing-in book for those working out of hours, in order to facilitate building evacuation checks. Whilst the university would encourage this practice, particularly in Schools where noxious

fumes may be given off as a result of a fire, the university also recognises that for many schools such a procedure would represent an unnecessarily onerous burden, given the general level of risk and the difficulty of rigorous enforcement. Heads of Schools should impress upon all students and staff using the building after normal working hours that it is of the utmost importance that they do sign in and do sign out conscientiously;

No student including postgraduates can be permitted to work outside normal hours unless (s)he has the explicit permission of the Head of School.

It is important for Schools to remember that, in general, the status of undergraduates and graduates differs with respect to training in safety-related matters. Undergraduates are normally deemed to be undergoing training, but not to be trained. In many respects, their position is analogous to university visitors, and a high level of supervision is required. Post-graduates are, by contrast, assumed to have greater experience, and to have received more extensive training in safety-related issues, and a somewhat lower level of supervision may be acceptable. The general rules with respect to supervision, and the role of risk assessment in determining the level of supervision. Broadly, the consequences of these rules are that whereas post-graduates may, subject to risk assessment, be allowed to work after hours in laboratories or other areas without direct supervision, albeit within the scope of the rules above and such local rules as are laid down by the school, undergraduates cannot be left to their own devices, and in particular cannot be allowed to work without supervision unless they have received appropriate training, and the risk is low.

University Safety Office
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