

# Fire Safety Management Policy and Procedures

## Richmond the American International University in London

**Version 1**  
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## Introduction

Richmond The American International University in London, hereafter referred to as The University, recognises that fire is a major risk to the lives of its staff, students and members of the public who visit the University. The loss of buildings and infrastructure due to fire also poses significant risks to the continuing of teaching functions undertaken within the University and Student Accommodation. The University will, therefore, ensure that fire safety is a priority in all areas under its control.

### 1. Fire Safety Management Policy

This policy is a supplement to and should be read in conjunction with the University Health and Safety Policy.

The University is committed to meet all duties placed upon it by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and other relevant legislation. Specifically, we will maintain high standards in fire safety in order to protect our employees, students, visitors and any other relevant people who are lawfully in our buildings or who may be affected by our activities. The University will take precautions to reduce the risk of fire by eliminating and reducing those risks where reasonably practicable, then managing and controlling the remaining residual risks.

It is the University's fire safety management policy, so far as is reasonably practicable to:

- Provide, and maintain, places of work, teaching, accommodation and recreation that are constructed, or refurbished, to ensure adequate structural protection and adequate means of escape for any building occupants in the event of a fire;
- Provide, and maintain, suitable and sufficient monitoring and alarm systems in the above places that ensure that building occupants receive adequate early warning of any fire related event;
- Provide, and maintain, suitable and sufficient information and communication systems that ensure timely and efficient response by the University's Security Services and that provide adequate details to the emergency fire services;
- Provide suitable and sufficient information and instruction on fire safety to University staff, students, contractors and visitors;
- Provide management arrangements for identifying and controlling fire risks including risks to life safety, business continuity and the environment;
- Provide all interested parties with appropriate and relevant fire safety advice by means of a directly appointed and properly qualified fire safety professional or by securing the services of external fire safety consultants.

## 2. LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT

Executive responsibility for fire safety lies with the President and Vice-Chancellor (VC) who is deemed to be the principal 'Responsible Person' for the University as identified in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

These duties are further delegated to the senior administrative officers of the University: the Provost (Deputy Vice-Chancellor); the Vice President (Pro Vice-Chancellor) Student Affairs; the Chief Operating Officer/ Director of Human Resources; the Vice President for Transformation planning and Strategy; Chief Financial Officer and Heads of Schools / Departments.

All University employees have a duty to observe and comply with this Policy and are responsible for managing the safe evacuation of their students, contractors and visitors whilst they are on the University premises.

## 3. FIRE SAFETY MANAGEMENT

This Fire Safety Management Plan sets out the mechanism, roles and responsibilities by which fire safety risks are to be managed. It includes details on how the University intends to meet the following fire safety objectives:

- Prevent the outbreak of fire at any University controlled building;
- Ensure (as far as reasonably practicable) that relevant people do not suffer death or serious injury following an outbreak of a fire at a University building;
- Limit the damage to building fabric and contents following an outbreak of fire at a University building;
- Limit the impact of a fire in a building causing disruption to the operations and business of the University;
- Optimise people's response to alarms by minimising their exposure to false alarms while giving them sufficient familiarity with alarms and evacuation procedure to respond appropriately when required;
- Ensure (as far as reasonably practicable) that individuals with particular evacuation needs are identified and assisted appropriately through creation of Personnel Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP);
- Manage University buildings to an appropriate level as defined in BS 9999 and PAS 79;
- Comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Achieve continual improvement in the way that fire safety is managed.

#### 4. FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The University's Estates and Facilities Committee and Health and Safety subcommittee will take a strategic overview of fire safety performance. In particular, it will ensure relevant competence requirements are established for senior managers and monitor that they are being met.

Head of Schools and Departments will ensure staff are appointed and trained as competent for key roles relevant to fire safety. This includes fire wardens and or as a marshal, evacuation chair operators etc. They will also ensure fire safety performance is addressed by the Health, Safety and Committee covering the School/Department.

The Chair of the Health and Safety Committee will ensure that the Terms of Reference of their Committee is appropriate to address fire safety improvement.

The Health and Safety Committee will monitor:

- That there are fire risk assessments for all buildings required to have them by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- That staff are trained for action in event of fire, with appropriate numbers of persons trained in fire prevention, fire protection and evacuation procedures and able to use fire extinguisher equipment.
- That systems effectively control work, in particular "hot works" and modifications, including temporary modifications to building structures and fire alarm systems.
- That arrangements have been established to provide maintenance and testing of fire safety systems in accordance with BS9999 and in agreement with Estates and Facilities.
- That robust communications are in place including for alerting building occupants in the event of fire.
- That procedures for responding to fire emergencies are maintained and exercised.
- That housekeeping standards and behaviours support fire prevention.

##### 4.1 Fire Risk Assessment

A competent Fire Risk Assessor will carry out overall fire risk assessments of buildings that are required to have them by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

In addition, risk assessments are carried out on all work and these must include the risk of fire and explosion as relevant to that work.

#### 5. SUPPORT

Fire safety systems are maintained under the control of the Vice President for Transformation Planning and Strategy assisted by competent directly-employed Estates and Facilities staff.

The procedures for assessing the competence, letting to contract, induction to site and continual performance monitoring of specialist contractors is determined by Estates and Facilities.

## 6. TRAINING

The strategy and coverage of Evacuation Officers and Fire Wardens and planning of warden search areas will be determined by fire risk assessment.

University buildings are required to hold 6 monthly fire drills with the purpose of:

- Testing and exercising the building fire evacuation plan and assessing the performance of Fire Evacuation Team members;
- Verifying the effectiveness of training;
- Identifying weaknesses in emergency procedures and systems;
- Identifying positive and negative responses from staff with designated responsibilities;
- Assessing the reliability of fire emergency equipment such as fire alarms, evacuation lifts, evacuation chairs and emergency voice communications equipment.

## 7. AWARENESS

The University Fire Policy will be disseminated to University staff on their arrival as part of the new starter induction process. Students will receive fire safety input as part of their Induction process. Visitors to the University will be briefed on their arrival by the staff member responsible for them during their visit. All contractors working at the University will be briefed by a member of the Estates and Facility team.

## 8. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

All residents of University-provided sleeping accommodation will be provided with essential fire safety information. These will be provided to all residents via in-room information as well as available on the University intranet and also provided to all new residents during orientation and thereafter once a year.

Fire Brigade Emergency Folders (Grab Bags) that include detailed information on our buildings are made readily available to attending fire service crews by means of hard copies located in all buildings and held by University Security Services who attend all fire alarm incidents.

## 9. DOCUMENTED INFORMATION

The following information is required to be documented in order to have in place an effective Fire Safety Management Plan:

- Fire Risk Assessments;
- Fire Brigade Emergency Folders and a Major Incident Plan;
- Test records of building fire equipment and installations including but not limited to fire alarms, emergency lights, extinguishers, fire shutters, refuge EVC, gas boilers, dry risers, fire dampers, AOV, fire doors;
- Permits to work in buildings including 'hot work' certificates;
- Training records and details of course content for the relevant fire safety courses such as fire wardens;
- Electronic copies of all correspondence relating to the Fire Risk Management System including records of calls made to the emergency services.

## 10. CONTROL OF WORK ON SITE

All construction and maintenance work at the University is strictly controlled by Estates and Facilities. This includes all hot work permits.

External Contractors cannot work at the University unless they have been formally approved by Estates and Facilities.

Estates and Facilities are responsible for the specification, installation, commissioning and maintenance of building fire protection systems. This includes fire separation, measures to limit fire spread, fire detection and alarm systems, fire suppression systems and emergency lighting. In doing so, E&F consults with the Fire Risk Assessor for advice on legal compliance and the application of relevant standards so that an agreed approach is adopted.

Estates and Facilities are responsible for the appointment of competent third parties (system designers, engineers, contractors) to specify, design, install and commission and maintain fire alarm, detection and suppression systems and emergency lighting.

The University's role is limited to appointing competent consultants and contractors, overseeing the design and construction process and accepting the building and associated systems at practical completion.

There is a maintenance plan in place for fire safety systems that includes:

- Fire Doors
- Fire Alarms
- Smoke Control Systems for Means of Escape
- Evacuation Chairs
- Emergency and Escape Lighting
- Fire Fighting Hydrants
- Fire Blankets and Extinguishers
- Gaseous and Foam (wet chemical) Extinguishing Systems
- Gas Boilers
- Electrical Installation

- Lightning Protection

## 11. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

Building fire risk assessments will be based on PAS 79 and will:

- Identify potential fire hazards in the workplace, and who might be harmed;
- Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing control measures are adequate or whether more should be done;
- Be recorded;
- Identify an action plan for the implementation of further control measures, with responsibilities clearly allocated;
- Be subject to regular review.

Building fire risk assessments are completed by a fire safety consultant acting on behalf of the University.

The Fire Risk Assessment Module has the following elements:

- Section 1 Identification of hazards
- Section 2 People at risk
- Section 3 Hazard control measures
- Section 4 Escape route provision
- Section 5 Detection and alarm systems
- Section 6 Arson risk control
- Section 7 Fire safety management
- Summary of fire risks and of existing control measures
- (Approximate) Number of staff
- (Approximate) Number of students
- Gross floor area
- Building Use e.g. academic, residential
- Date of assessment
- Identification of assessor
- Priority issues within the building
- Actions and recommendations
- Building fire risk assessment score

The system is used to:

- Confirm risk ratings (fire risk assessment score);
- Identify improvement actions;
- Track improvement actions and provide records for the purpose of monitoring, audit and review;
- Prioritise improvements and building upgrades, based on the overall risk rating.

### 11.1 Building fire risk assessment score

4-point risk matrix			Likelihood			
			1	2	3	4
			Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely
			Has happened very rarely or never before	Where harm is unlikely to occur	Possible for harm to occur in the next year	Where it is certain or almost certain that harm will occur in the next year
Severity	1	Minor Minor incident including injury to one or more individuals such as cuts, scrapes, minor bruising and skin irritation	1	2	3	4
	2	Serious Significant injury or illness causing short term disability to one or more person. For example, and Over 7 Day injury / incapacitation.	2	4	6	8
	4	Major Major injury or illness/disease-causing long-term disability to one or more person including broken bones, occupational disease and ill-health	4	8	12	16
	8	Extreme Fatality or life-threatening illness / disease to one or more persons	8	16	24	32
<b>Risk Key</b>						
<p><b>Low:</b> No additional control measures are usually required. Consideration may be given to more cost-effective solutions or improvement that imposes no additional cost burden. However, control measures must be monitored to ensure effectiveness taking corrective action where necessary</p>						
<p><b>Medium:</b> Further control measures are required to reduce the risk. Where significant resources are required, short term interim measures may have to be taken until long term measures are implemented. Where the severity is 'high' or there is a high likelihood of harm, urgent action should be taken</p>						
<p><b>High:</b> Work should not be started or continued until the risk has been reduced</p>						

### 11.2 Review of Fire Risk Assessments

Fire risk assessments must be reviewed when there is reason to suspect that it is no longer valid, or there has been a significant change in the premises that has affected the fire safety precautions. Reasons for review could include:

- Changes to work activities or the introduction of new equipment;
- Alterations to the building, including internal layout;
- Substantial changes to fixtures or fittings;
- The introduction, change of use, increase in storage, or removal of hazardous substances;
- The failure of fire precautions e.g. alarm systems;
- A significant increase in the numbers of people using the building;
- The presence of disabled people;
- A fire or significant 'near miss'.

Any person who proposes or introduces any change that could affect the building fire risk assessment or the fire precautions must advise the Estates and Facilities department first.

The University currently operates a risk based approach to review of fire risk assessments. 'High risk' and 'Medium risk' buildings will be reviewed annually; this will normally include all sleeping accommodation and buildings with other fire risks such as large quantities of flammable materials. Other 'Low risk' buildings will be reviewed every 2 years.

### 11.3 Fire Risk Assessment Planned Review Meetings

The VP for Transformation Planning and Strategy will carry out bi-weekly meetings of the Fire Strategy Group to review the fire risk assessment program. Attending the review

meetings will be the University Fire Risk Advisor, others as required. The meeting will discuss and review the results of fire risk assessment audits, and efforts to address findings. In addition 'significant findings' of building fire risk assessments will be an agenda item on Health and Safety Committee meetings.

## 12. INCIDENT RESPONSE COMMUNICATIONS

The University has established documented and maintained policies and procedures for Incident Response Communication, which includes:

- Means of being alerted to fire
  - All University Buildings will have means of alerting building occupants to a fire.
  - University buildings have a fire alarm system incorporating automatic fire detection.
- Communications between management and between management and staff
- Communications with the Fire and Rescue Services
  - The University has in place procedures for calling out the fire and rescue services.
  - University Security Services are responsible for calling out the fire services when they are alerted to a fire alarm sounding. This could be as result of the receipt of a fire alarm signal from a University building fire alarm signal or as result of a telephone, running call or from a Security Patroller via radio.
- Fire action posters are displayed in all University buildings.

## 13. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

### 13.1 Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation

#### *13.1.1 Acceptable rate of false alarms*

The University will ensure that its fire alarm systems need to be monitored in respect of false fire alarm activations.

All fire alarm signals from a University building are recorded in the Security Services Control Room. False Alarm signals are brought to the notice of the Estates and Facilities for their information and further action as required.

The incidence of fire alarm signals from a building is recorded by calendar year. The spreadsheets record the following information:

- a) The premises name
- b) The number of fire alarm devices in the building
- c) The totals of fire alarm signals from previous years
- d) The running totals of fire alarm signals for the current calendar year

The monitoring, measuring, analysing and evaluation of fire alarm signals will take place every 3 months and will be carried out by the University Fire Safety Advisor.

Records of the above will be retained on file for 3 years by the University.

#### *13.1.2 Fire Risk Management System Performance evaluation*

The VP for Transformation Planning and Strategy at the University is required to overview the effectiveness of the Fire Risk Management Plan. They will report monthly to the University Board.

The VP for Transformation Planning and Strategy is required to monitor the effectiveness of the Fire Safety Management Plan throughout the year reporting issues as required.

#### *13.1.3 Internal Audit*

The University Fire Safety Management Plan will be subject to an internal audit at planned intervals to provide information on whether the Fire Risk Management Plan conforms to:

- a) University requirements for its FRMP
- b) FRMS is effectively implemented and maintained

This internal audit may be carried out by members of the University Internal Audits team or another team member or an Estates and Facilities staff member.

The audit criteria will be to review and assess compliance with the FRMP and the effectiveness of the measures being taken. In particular, the audit will examine the following seven factors of strategic fire risk management:

- Fire risk assessments of buildings that are required to have them by the Regulatory Reform (Fire safety) Order 2005;
- Managers in place empowered and able to command sufficient resources to maintain the fire safety systems at the University;
- All staff trained in action in event of fire procedures with appropriate numbers of persons trained in fire prevention, fire protection and evacuation procedures, and able to use appropriate fire extinguishing equipment;
- A management system in place to control work on site, e.g. repairs to building structure, and in particular 'hot work';
- Maintenance and testing of fire safety systems;
- Robust communications procedures including means of staff being alerted to fire, management to management, management to staff, messages to occupants; and communications with the fire and rescue service in the event of a fire;
- Established, documented and maintained procedures for identifying and responding to any unplanned event, potential emergency or disaster.

Audits of the FRMP cannot be carried out by the University Fire Safety Advisor(s) and must be carried out by a person deemed to be 'competent' to carry out an audit internal of the organisation.

The results and reports of the audit will be sent directly to the VP for Transformation Planning and Strategy and sent on to others and results reported to University Board.

Audit records will be kept on file for a period of at least 3 years in accordance with the University's retention policy.

### 13.2 Management Review

The VP for Transformation Planning and Strategy will review this Fire Safety Management Plan annually.

The management review will include but may not be limited to:

- a) status of actions from previous management reviews
- b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the FSMP
- c) information on the fire safety performance, including trends in:
  - i. Nonconformities and corrective actions
  - ii. Monitoring and measurement results
  - iii. Audit results
  - iv. Interested party feedback
  - v. Evaluation of compliance with legal and other requirements

The outputs from the above management review will also consider and include decisions related to:

- a) continual improvement opportunities
- b) improvements related to interested party requirements
- c) resource needs to enable improvement to the FSMP and its processes

The records of the management reviews of this FSMP will be retained for a period of 3 years in accordance with the University's retention policy.

Responsible department: Estates and Facilities
Approving body: University Board
Date approved: 11 January 2021 (by Chair's action)
Date for review: January 2022