

## UNIVERSITY SAFETY & HEALTH POLICY

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is committed to ensuring a high standard of safety and health (S&H) and to the prevention of injury and ill health for its staff, students, contractors and visitors<sup>1</sup> in association with its research, teaching and service activities at all sites owned, operated or controlled by the University. This commitment is demonstrated through the implementation of the following policy statements.

### Policy Statements

#### **1. Safety & Health Culture**

NUS is committed to building a positive S&H culture where S&H is embraced as a core value. S&H would be integrated in all education, research and workplace activities, thus creating a safe and healthy environment for all staff, students, contractors and visitors.

#### **2. Legal Compliance**

NUS is committed to comply with all applicable S&H legislation, corporate S&H policies and directives.

#### **3. Implementation of Safety and Health Management Systems**

NUS will proactively identify, assess and control the S&H hazards associated with its activities to prevent injuries and ill health to NUS staff, students, contractors and visitors. NUS will promptly investigate and identify root causes of incidents and implement measures for the prevention of recurrences. This shall be achieved through the implementation of S&H management systems and related S&H programmes, standards and directives at the University, faculties and departments. The specific requirements for the identification and management of S&H risks are detailed in the various NUS S&H manuals. S&H shall be integrated into work activities and appropriate S&H assessment shall be conducted prior to the commencement of activities where required.

#### **4. Regular Monitoring & Review**

The University's S&H performance will be monitored through the Enterprise Risk Management System and changes shall be made to S&H management systems to enhance and raise S&H standards. NUS shall establish necessary mechanisms to monitor non-conformances to NUS S&H policies, manuals and standards to ensure necessary corrective and preventive actions have been taken. The S&H management system shall also be subjected to comprehensive review at defined periods to ensure continual improvement of its S&H performance.

#### **5. Safety and Health Roles and Responsibilities in NUS**

Every staff and student has a responsibility to comply with the NUS S&H Policy. The responsibility in ensuring S&H in the University begins with top management and extends to all levels of management, including Heads of Department (HoDs), supervisors, faculty and staff, working collaboratively to continually improve the University's S&H performance. The responsibilities of various stakeholders in ensuring a safe working environment at NUS are outlined in Appendices A and B.

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President  
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<sup>1</sup> Interns, collaborators, long and short-term visitors

## Appendix A

### **1. Management's Responsibilities**

The ultimate responsibility for S&H in NUS rests with the President of the University. The President may delegate the authority for S&H management to the Provost, Deputy Presidents, Vice Presidents, and other members of the Senior Management. Senior Management shall provide leadership, strategic direction, and adequate resources for the establishment of a positive S&H culture at NUS. This would include:

- Establishing necessary University-level committees to address specific S&H issues;
- Establishing a comprehensive framework and approving specific initiatives and programmes to enhance and strengthen S&H policies, practices and culture in NUS;
- Establishing goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) for all Deans/HoDs, Directors and other members of University management and monitoring the performance of these KPIs.

The Deans, HoDs, Directors and other members of the management of the University are responsible for providing leadership in S&H stewardship. They shall:

- Lead the establishment and promotion of a positive S&H culture in their areas of management, and encourage positive safety behaviour and practices of staff, students, contractors and visitors;
- Ensure unsafe behaviour and practices as well as non-compliances are adequately addressed and appropriate preventive and punitive measures are taken;
- Ensure that areas under their management have a risk assessment framework in place;
- Ensure that units under their management have adequate resources such as space, manpower and funding for risk controls, programmes and equipment based on risk priority;
- Ensure that individuals under their management have defined S&H roles and responsibilities. This could include the appointment of Safety and Health Coordinators and Safety and Health Committee Chairpersons;
- Ensure that individuals under their management have the authority to implement appropriate S&H policies, risk controls and programmes;
- Ensure that units under their management including activities undertaken in shared, common and/or core facilities, are in compliance with legislation, NUS S&H policies, manuals and standards.

### **2. Supervisor's Responsibilities**

All University supervisors are responsible for protecting the S&H of staff, students and visitors under their supervision and within their area of management. This responsibility includes:

- Ensuring continued compliance with NUS S&H policies, programmes, directives and applicable legislative requirements;
- Ensuring that equipment are safe to use and well maintained;
- Ensuring that their staff are competent to perform their tasks safely by identifying and addressing their training needs;
- Ensuring that staff participate in University safety training programmes and complete any required job-specific training;
- Ensuring that students and/or visitors are trained before they carry out activities that may pose a S&H risk and that they are supervised when carrying out these activities;
- Ensuring that a system is established for the selection and management of contractors, including reviewing the S&H impact of their activities;
- Ensuring necessary corrective and preventive actions are taken to address any non-conformances to NUS S&H policies, manuals and standards.

In academic areas, supervisors include Principal Investigators (PIs), class instructors/laboratory supervisors, laboratory directors, or others having direct supervisory authority. For administrative areas, the supervisors are the managers. Specifically, in the area of research, the PI shall assume the responsibility for safety in his or her laboratories. The HoD shall be the person responsible for safety in teaching laboratories and other

areas of work in his or her Department. For Adjunct Professors, it is the responsibility of the co-PI or HoD to ensure their compliance with University S&H policies.

### **3. Office of Safety, Health & Environment (OSHE)'s Responsibilities**

OSHE is the corporate office in charge of workplace S&H matters, environmental compliance and emergency management in NUS. OSHE is responsible for the following:

- Advising and assisting Senior Management in ensuring that the University is in compliance with S&H regulations and other requirements;
- Developing University-level S&H policies, standards, programmes, directives and other elements of the S&H management system;
- Deploying Safety and Health Officers to NUS faculties, schools, research institutes and administrative clusters to facilitate the Deans, Directors and Cluster Heads in implementing their S&H management system and adoption of S&H best practices;
- Advising and guiding the Department Safety and Health Coordinators in the discharge of their S&H responsibilities;
- Acting as the point of contact between S&H regulatory agencies and the University;
- Serving as the secretariat for University-level committees.

### **4. Safety and Health Coordinators' Responsibilities**

The Safety and Health Coordinators are appointed by the Departments to provide assistance and support to supervisors and managers in their respective units for the development, implementation and monitoring of their unit's S&H systems and programmes. Their responsibilities include:

- Serving as the first point of contact for Department's staff and students on all S&H matters;
- Liaising with OSHE on all S&H matters pertaining to the department;
- Providing guidance, advice and technical assistance to HoD and Department Safety and Health Committee on all S&H matters.

### **5. NUS Staff and Students' Responsibilities**

Staff and students are responsible for:

- Keeping themselves informed of situations and conditions that could affect their safety and health;
- Participating in risk assessments and training programmes provided by their supervisors, instructors and OSHE (if applicable);
- Adhering to S&H regulations, NUS requirements and practices in their workplace, classroom, laboratory and student residences;
- Reporting to their supervisors or instructors on hazards, near misses, incidents or accidents in the workplace, classroom, laboratory or on campus;
- Communicating to contractors and visitors, any relevant information that they might require to minimise S&H risks while performing their activities.

## Appendix B

### **1. Organisational Development Steering Committee (ODSC)**

The ODSC is chaired by the President. The committee members include Provost, Deputy President (Research & Technology) and Deputy President (Administration), Vice President (Campus Infrastructure), Vice President (Office of Human Resources), Senior Director (Office of Financial Services), Senior Director (Office of Resource Planning), Senior Director (Computer Centre), Director (Office of Safety Health and Environment) and Director (Office of Risk Management). The committee will set goals, establish a comprehensive framework and approve specific initiatives to enhance and strengthen the S&H policies, practices and culture in NUS.

### **2. Risk Management Steering Committee (RMSC)**

The RMSC is chaired by the President. The committee members include Provost, Chief Executive Officer of NUS Enterprise, Deputy President (Research & Technology) and Deputy President (Administration), the Chief Risk Officer and Director of OSHE. The key purpose of the committee is to maintain sound and robust risk (including safety, health and environmental risk) management in NUS, and to provide appropriate communications to key stakeholders. The committee will review the risk profile of NUS, prioritize and ensure proper implementation of risk management initiatives in the University.

### **3. Institutional Laboratory Safety Committee (ILSC)**

The ILSC is appointed by the Provost. The committee consists of no fewer than five members who provide collective experience and expertise in physical science and engineering. The committee includes the Director of OSHE and an OSHE staff who serves as the secretary of the committee. The ILSC members shall have the capability to assess safe practices for the use of agents and equipment in these fields and identify any potential risks to safety, health or environment. The committee will also regularly review S&H policies (except those related to biosafety policies) and associated laboratory safety programmes to ensure their relevance and adequacy to the University. The committee shall be the final authority for endorsing risk assessments that cannot be evaluated at the departmental/faculty level for all laboratory-based projects except those reviewed by the Institutional Biosafety Committee.

### **4. Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)**

The IBC is appointed by the Provost. The committee consists of no fewer than five members who provide collective experience and expertise in research involving the use of materials of biological origin. The committee includes the Director of OSHE and an OSHE staff who serves as the secretary of the committee. The IBC members shall have the capability to identify any potential risks to public health or the environment and assess the appropriateness of safety control measures. It will also regularly review the Biosafety Programme and biosafety policies to ensure their relevance and adequacy to the University. The committee shall be the final authority for endorsing risk assessments for life science projects.

### **5. Institutional Construction Safety Committee (ICSC)**

The ICSC is appointed by the Deputy President (Administration). The committee consists of no fewer than five members who provide collective experience and expertise in construction safety and thus ensure the safety, health and welfare of staff, students, visitors and contractors against the hazards associated with construction activities. The committee includes the Director of OSHE and an OSHE staff who serves as the secretary of the committee. It will provide strategic oversight on all construction-related safety issues. It will regularly review the NUS Construction Safety Policy and NUS Construction Safety Programme, manuals, directives and other relevant guidance documents of the University to ensure their adequacy and alignment to the University's strategic S&H objectives in construction.