

Fire safety policy



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Introduction and policy statement

The University of Bristol recognises that fire is a major risk to the lives of its staff, students, neighbours, contractors, and members of the public who visit its buildings.

The loss of buildings and infrastructure due to fire also poses significant risks for continuing research and teaching, the University's reputation, and the impact on the student experience.

"The university has no tolerance towards staff, students or contractors deliberately breaching fire safety rules or fire safety legislation. Where it is proven an individual has knowingly contravened these rules or legislation, the university will treat this as a very serious incident and apply its disciplinary process as appropriate to the individual. This could result in the termination of accommodation tenancies, employment, or appointment, amongst other sanctions".

Registrar and University Secretary, Lucinda Parr.

Fire safety is a priority for the University, and it will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the risk from fire will be well-managed in compliance with the requirements of the:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO)
- Equality Act 2010, by providing suitable means of escape arrangements for all people attending its buildings and where applicable.
- Housing Act 2004, as regards fire safety

Furthermore, where appropriate and relevant to our properties, we will adopt measures introduced by:

- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022

The Fire Safety Act and the Building Safety Act apply to multi-occupancy, multi-storey residential accommodation. However, some of the general principles applied in these Acts can be implemented in most University buildings and should be taken into consideration.

This Fire Safety Policy applies to all premises and activities under the University's control. It sets out the framework by which the University expects to meet its fire safety duties.

Where third-party and partnership properties do not fall under University control, this policy does not apply to the owners/managers of those properties. However, the University expects assurance from the management of these properties that similar standards are maintained.

Key objectives

This policy is supported by the following key objectives, which represent a commitment to continually improve fire safety standards across the University. Further details can be found in the Fire Safety Policy's Supporting Document.

Fire risk assessments:

- The University of Bristol will ensure all its properties have a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment (FRA) carried out by a competent fire risk assessor. They should be third party accredited and qualified to the guidelines set out in the Fire Sector Federation Industry Standards for Fire Risk Assessors.
- All fire risk assessments will be completed to the agreed standard as defined within the Fire Safety Policy Supporting document. Any actions identified

through the FRA will be prioritised, with a deadline for completion set in accordance with the agreed fire risk assessment process.

- Building drawings will contain fire safety information relevant to completion of fire risk assessments, including compartmentation lines, service entry points, wet or dry rising firefighting mains and other specific hazards.

Training & education:

- All University staff will undertake basic fire safety awareness training through annual online training, as well as building induction training which includes fire safety.
- All new students will complete an online induction which includes fire safety. Students housed in university accommodation will read and sign a tenancy agreement that includes fire safety information, before taking up residency.
- During residency students will also receive regular kitchen safety talks which include reference to good fire safety practice.

Maintenance:

- The University will ensure its buildings are maintained and tested to a standard that meets statutory requirements and reduces the risk of fire.

Compliance testing:

- All building related compliance testing will be the responsibility of, and coordinated by, Campus Division, assisted where appropriate by suitably trained and competent staff from schools or services, such as Estates Assistants or residence porters.
- Buildings will be inspected for fire safety on a regular basis by Facilities Managers, by the Fire Safety Adviser as an informal audit/inspection and on a risk-based inspection programme by Avon Fire and Rescue Service (AFRS). The University process for dealing with actions raised by these inspections is contained in the Fire Safety Policy's Supporting Document.
- The fire safety adviser will undertake periodic re-inspections and checks of outstanding actions and will escalate where appropriate.

Evacuations with assistance:

- Every building with passenger lift(s) will have at least one lift installed or upgraded to evacuation standard for use in the managed escape of people with a disability that prevents them using stairs. All new multi-storey buildings will have at least one evacuation-standard passenger lift.
- Every building with a passenger lift will have refuges and associated communication systems installed, maintained, and tested weekly.
- Building evacuation plans will include workable/achievable means of escape for people who would need assistance to evacuate at all times (Personal

Emergency Evacuation Plans). The plans must not rely on fire service intervention to work.

Fire alarms:

- Fire alarms in university buildings will be tested regularly to maintain statutory compliance. The university will follow guidance provided in the current British Standard.
- Security officers from Campus Division will attend all University building fire alarms as quickly as possible, dependant on other work commitments and their location at the time. Security officers will not always be "First Responders" at fire alarm incidents.
- Security staff are expected to respond to incidents or requests by staff/students to attend any security-related incidents. This could include fire alarm activations and assist persons as appropriate. Officers will dynamically assess how to respond given the nature of the incident.
- All building fire alarm systems will be monitored via an approved system.
- Where appropriate, building fire alarm systems will incorporate voice messages as well as sirens and red flashing beacons for areas where hearing a fire alarm is difficult due to ambient noise levels, or where it can be anticipated people with hearing difficulties may be.
- Every University-controlled building with a fire detection and alarm system will have a red fire document box located near the fire alarm panel. The box will contain all relevant fire safety information for the building, or the location of where further information can be found, which will include, Plans, and specialist site specific information for use by the fire service, and testing logs where testing is done locally by staff. Other testing records will be held centrally by the Compliance Team and made available electronically to Facilities Managers or others as needed for work or audit purposes.

New properties and major works:

- The University's Fire Safety Adviser will be consulted at an early stage prior to any property acquisition or lease to help ensure that all appropriate fire safety arrangements are in place or have been identified. Newly acquired buildings will not be occupied until a full fire risk assessment has been completed by Campus Division and verified by the Fire Safety Adviser.
- Sprinkler systems or other appropriate fire suppression systems will be installed as part of all new build projects where recommended".
- For all building works where internal structural penetrations occur, works will not be signed-off as complete (and paid for) until a formal compartmentation check has been carried out.
- All works involving penetrations of the building structure, such as drilling through walls or floors to install pipes or cables, will be controlled by Campus

Division via the Permit to Work (PtW) process. This includes works generated by IT Services or fire alarm system re-cabling works. Campus Division will develop and maintain a fire compartmentation strategy which must be followed by anyone involved in works where penetrations are involved. A new Generic Process Requirement will be developed to cover service penetrations and fire compartmentation.

Organisational responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the "responsible person," under the RRO.

Executive responsibility for the implementation of this policy has been delegated to the Vice-Chancellor and President.

The executive responsibility for health and safety on a day-to-day basis is delegated by the Vice-Chancellor and President to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost, and to the Registrar and University Secretary. The Board of Trustees will ensure that arrangements are in place to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

Please see the associate Fire Safety Policy's Supporting Document for definition of Responsible Person and other roles named in the RRO.

Chief Property Officer

In addition to the responsibilities of a Head of Division, the Chief Property Officer will ensure the following points are implemented, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Risk assessments:

- A fire risk assessment is undertaken for each building the University owns or is the landlord of. To put this into practice, the fire risk assessment and building fire manual will be completed by a competent person (as defined within the Fire Safety Policy's Supporting Document), working closely with a representative or representatives from the building occupiers. All university fire risk assessments will be in the standard document format managed by Campus Division.
- Where the university is a landlord, the university will seek assurance that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment has been completed and maintained by a competent person.
- The outcomes of fire risk assessments relating to building fabric, structure and fire safety systems are addressed and appropriate control measures implemented in all University owned buildings.

- Where the University leases its buildings to other organisations, fully or in part, the tenants are required to provide sufficient information concerning their activities to allow the University to complete an appropriate fire risk assessment.
- Residential partnership property owners will provide assurance to the University that their properties are suitably managed, maintained and fire-risk assessed.
- The building fabric, fire safety systems of the premises, and equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety are maintained by the Campus Division, are fit for purpose and in efficient working order in all University of Bristol premises.
- A review of the fire risk assessment is undertaken before commencing any works that would or could be covered by the Construction, Design and Management Regulations.
- The Building Fire Risk Assessment and associated building fire manual is maintained and reviewed regularly depending on the risk, with a maximum two-year review date or sooner, if a significant change occurs. All relevant sections are to be updated, and testing logs completed accurately.

Access and evacuations:

- An AccessAble entry for most publicly accessed University buildings is available online and should include information on available means of escape within the building.
- Lifts installed or refurbished to evacuation standard must have a suitable Management Plan in place for their use in an emergency with trained staff available to put the plan into effect.
- Risk assess buildings with passenger lifts to determine if those lifts can be used for evacuation of disabled people during the early stages of a fire based on BS9999 and other relevant guidance (see Fire Safety Policy's Supporting Document).
- Host a list of University Access Statements including a link to the online information resource [AccessAble](#).
- Coordinate statutory testing in staff accommodation to minimise disruption and disturbance of family members.
- Ensure accessible buildings also have viable egress routes available for emergency evacuation.

Contractors working on behalf of Campus Division

The Chief Property Officer will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that contractors:

- Assess the fire safety risks arising from their works or activities and implement control measures including use of the Permit to Work process where appropriate, taking permit application lead times into account.
- Co-operate with the University on all matters of fire safety.
- Have received appropriate information and instruction to enable them to comply with this policy and the University's emergency arrangements.
- Obey instructions relating to fire safety given by an authorised University member of staff.
- Report shortcomings in existing fire safety installations, services or compartmentation when identified during their own works.
- If their works reduce existing fire safety standards on a temporary basis, then alternative arrangements need to be put in place to ensure fire safety risks are effectively managed during this period.

Deans, Divisional Heads, Heads of School

Deans, Divisional Heads and Heads of School will, as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that:

- Activities and processes falling under their control that present a fire safety risk are risk-assessed and brought to the attention of the Facilities Manager for inclusion in the fire risk assessment where appropriate.
- Where fire risks are identified, necessary steps are taken to reduce or mitigate the risks to fire safety and suitable control measures implemented.
- Arrangements are in place to effectively respond to and manage emergency incidents within buildings where their staff and students are located (e.g., fire wardens, fire marshals).
- Where staff or students occupy a building in which the University of Bristol is a tenant, suitable liaison, coordination and cooperation is provided by a suitably-trained person on behalf of the Dean, Divisional Head or Head of School, and the landlord or agent, as appropriate to allow them to comply with this policy and supporting document.
- The person (as nominated by the School or Service Head), will collaborate with the Facilities Manager to assist keeping fire safety documentation (Building Fire Manual, Fire Risk Assessment and Access Statement) up to date and to ensure outstanding actions are dealt with.
- Staff under their control are given fire safety induction training and instruction in fire safety matters commensurate with their activities. Ensure undergraduate and postgraduate students receive fire safety inductions when first joining the University or when their study takes them from one faculty to another.
- Visitors are informed of the fire safety arrangements for the building by their host.

- Will not make alterations to building fabric or rooms where these will affect fire escape routes or fire protection facilities without appropriate consultation at an early stage.
- A suitable Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan is developed for relevant staff, students or visitors that require them, to include details of any necessary people or equipment that may be required to put the Plan into effect.

Contractors working on behalf of a School or Service

The Dean, Divisional Head and Head of School will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that contractors:

- Assess the fire safety risks arising from their works or activities and implement control measures including use of the Permit to Work process where appropriate, taking permit application lead times into account.
- Co-operate with the University on all matters of fire safety.
- Have received appropriate information and instruction to enable them to comply with this policy and the University's emergency arrangements.
- Obey instructions relating to fire safety given by an authorised University member of staff.
- Will not carry out any work that affects building integrity or fire compartmentation unless managed by the Campus Division.

Education Services / Residential Life

Campus Division Partnership Manager and Residential Life will:

- Ensure undergraduate and postgraduate students receive fire safety inductions when first joining the University and any other relevant information and instruction during residency.
- Gain assurance from building management teams in partnership properties, that fire safety inductions and/or suitable training has been provided. Records of attendance/completion should be held and made available if required, such as during audits or post-fire investigations.
- Ensure staff and students under their control comply with the University's fire safety arrangements.
- Deal with any interferences, misuse or disabling of fire safety precautions by staff or students through the University disciplinary process.
- Write PEEPs and make necessary arrangements for new students or staff who make a disability or illness known.

Director of Health and Safety

The Director of Health and Safety will:

- Provide competent fire safety advice to enable the University to comply with its duties under this policy, as well as:
 - the RRO
 - the Fire Safety Act
 - the Building Safety Actas relevant to the University and any other relevant legislation and standards.
- Provide assurance that fire safety arrangements remain effective.
- Monitor and review the Fire Safety Policy and statutory requirements.
- Consult with relevant statutory bodies on matters of fire safety, as necessary.
- Act on behalf of the University in any discussion with relevant enforcement agencies.
- Develop appropriate guidance and standards to enable the requirements of this policy to be understood and implemented.
- Make relevant fire safety training available to University staff.
- Assist staff to produce suitable and sufficient fire safety documentation.

University Fire Safety Adviser

The Fire Safety Adviser has a responsibility to:

- Create and maintain the University Fire Safety Policy and Personal Evacuation Plan Policy in consultation with all relevant management and trade union representatives.
- Act as the University's subject matter expert on fire safety, providing suitable and sufficient fire safety advice to the Director of Health and Safety and others within the University as appropriate.
- Monitor fire safety legislation and British Standards to provide timely information to the University as appropriate to its activities and the impact of any relevant changes.
- Ensure staff receive suitable information, instruction, and training to enable them to meet their fire safety related roles and responsibilities Investigate the causes of fires and create reports for management where relevant, including recommendations for appropriate action to prevent reoccurrence and to comply with management responsibilities under this policy.
- Act as the main point of contact and liaison for enforcing authorities on matters of fire safety.
- Conduct ad-hoc fire safety inspections of buildings to help ensure day-to-day fire safety arrangements are complied with, reporting shortcomings to relevant management where necessary.

Staff

Staff have a responsibility to:

- Observe all instructions, information and training intended to secure safety, including fire safety.
- Co-operate with the University on matters of fire safety.
- Not misuse or interfere with any building fabric or equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety, including propping fire doors open using unapproved means.
- Report any obvious defects or shortcomings in university fire safety equipment, arrangements, or procedures.
- Take steps to reduce or mitigate risks if a work risk assessment identifies an activity is likely to adversely affect fire safety and inform the Facilities Manager so that the fire risk assessment can be updated accordingly.
- Ensure visitors they are hosting leave the building in the event of a fire alarm and go to the fire assembly area.
- When residing in University provided accommodation, comply, and cooperate with the University on fire safety, including statutory testing of fire safety equipment and installations in their accommodation.

Staff are not expected to use portable fire extinguishers to fight fires. Certain staff, such as security officers, estates assistants and laboratory technicians receive fire extinguisher training as part of their roles but using an extinguisher to fight a fire is voluntary.

Students

Students have a responsibility to:

- Disclose medical conditions or disabilities that would affect their ability to escape a building in the event of fire. The University will work with the student to develop a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan to facilitate a suitable assisted means of escape.
- Attend mandatory fire safety training on first arrival at University residential accommodation.
- Observe all instructions, information and training intended to observe fire safety.
- Co-operate with the University on matters of fire safety.
- Not misuse or interfere with any building fabric or equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety.
- Report any obvious defects or shortcomings in University fire safety arrangements or procedures.

Students are not expected to use portable fire extinguishers to fight fires.