

Health and Safety annual report 2017

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the work carried out by and on behalf of the UCEA Health and Safety Committee in 2017. It reports on the performance of UCEA, its partner organisations and the sector against the final year of the UCEA Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-20. It provides summary accident and injury statistics for the past four years, based on data collected by the Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA), as well as some summary findings from UCEA's annual absence survey.

2. UCEA Health and Safety Committee

UCEA Health and Safety Committee Membership

The Committee is chaired by Professor Simone Wonnacott, Principal of Leeds College of Art. The current full membership is presented below:

Role	Name
Chair (Head of an HE Institution)	Professor Simone Wonnacott Leeds College of Art
UCEA Chief Executive	Helen Fairfoul Chief Executive
University Secretary AHUA representative	Jayne Sadgrove Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary University of Cardiff
AMOSSHE representative	Mandi Barron Head of Student Support Services Bournemouth University
Head of Estates AUDE representative	Sandy Lynam Director of Estates and Facilities Anglia Ruskin University
Head of Estates AUDE representative	Mark Swales Director of Estates and Facilities Sheffield Hallam University
Radiation Safety Professional AURPO representative	Jim Hunter Safety and Radiation Protection Officer University of East Anglia
Head of Finance BUFDG representative	Vacancy
CUBO representative	Stewart Ross Head of Commercial Services University of Leeds
GuildHE representative	Giosi Birkett Director of Human Resources Newman University
Medical Schools Council (MSC) representative	By correspondence only
Higher Education Occupational Practitioners (HEOPS) Representative	Aileen Stewart Occupational Health Manager Glasgow University
Head of HR UHR representative	Rob Allan Director of HR Loughborough University

Role	Name
Head of HR UHR representative	Joanne Marshall Director of HR and OD University of Bradford
H&S Professional USHA Chair	Cathy Day Director of Risk, Health & Safety University of Southampton
H&S Professional USHA representative	Gary Wood Health and Safety Adviser University of Huddersfield
H&S Professional USHA representative	Vacancy
UCEA representatives -	
Head of HR Advice and Secretary to the Committee	Nicola Carter
Deputy Chief Executive	Roshan Israni

A list of the full names of each of the sector organisations is included as an appendix to this report.

Terms of Reference

The Committee acts as a central point for discussion and resolution of health and safety matters within the HE sector.

In particular, the Committee is tasked with the following:-

- To advise the UCEA Board and UCEA members on matters of health and safety.
- To represent HE institutions (HEIs) on matters of health and safety and be a mechanism for explaining the particular needs of the sector.
- To identify, generate and publish guidance for HEIs where appropriate.
- To provide a network for collective discussion and action on health and safety matters across the various associations within HE.
- To report to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on sector progress on health and safety.
- To nominate representatives of Higher Education employers to participate in forums, such as the Higher Education Safety and Health Forum (HESH) and to provide the brief and mandate for such fora.
- To identify a programme for UCEA Health and safety seminar activity.
- To produce responses on behalf of the sector to appropriate consultations on legislation and guidance.

The Committee meets twice a year in May and November, and reports to the UCEA Board.

3. Higher Education Safety and Health (HESH) FORUM

The HESH Forum comprises representatives of UCEA, the HSE, USHA and the trade unions (currently UCU, UNISON and Unite) and is scheduled to meet twice yearly (in May and November) to discuss health and safety matters of mutual interest. Its purpose is to act as a forum for the HE sector to develop a partnership approach between employer and employee representatives and to provide strategic oversight and direction on matters of occupational health and safety. The Forum met twice in 2017. Some of the issues discussed by the Forum in 2017 included:

- Stress at work
- Facility time reporting regulations (which include health and safety facility time)
- Fire safety
- Project Revise

HESH Forum membership:

The current membership of the Forum is set out below:

Role	Name
Chair of the Forum	Professor Simone Wonnacott
HSE representative	Maria Strangward
UCU representative	Adam Lincoln
USHA Chair	Cathy Day
Unison representative	Michael Hines
Unite representative	Christopher Kennedy
UCEA representative	Helen Fairfoul / Roshan Israni
UCEA representative	Nicola Carter

4. HE Sector-Level Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-20

In 2016, following a wide sector consultation, the UCEA Health and Safety Committee published the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-20 for the HE sector. The strategy is framed around three themes: culture, competence and collaboration. The Health and Safety Committee publishes annual actions plans to support it in meeting priority areas under the strategy. UCEA has recently published the second annual action plan, for 2018. Copies of the Strategy and the 2018 action plan can be found on the UCEA website at: www.ucea.ac.uk/en/empres/hands/h-scommittee/index.cfm.

Actions taken in 2017

Notable activities undertaken by UCEA and other Committee members include:

- An agreement and work undertaken to develop a Stress Management resource pack for HEIs, in partnership with the HE trade unions through the HESH Forum.
- A [UCEA response](#) on behalf of HE employers to the consultation on the Government's Health, Work and Disability Green Paper.
- The launch of Universities UK's [Step Change programme](#) of work on mental health in HE, which covers staff and students.
- The publication of guidance from HEOPS on [Occupational Health in HE institutions](#), in partnership with UCEA and USHA.
- A seminar by UCEA in May 2017 on supporting mental health and managing stress in the HE workforce, which included coverage of [relevant initiatives](#) such as Time to Change and [case studies from HEIs](#).
- The publication of a revised and updated version of UCEA's [toolkit for employing staff overseas](#), which includes health, safety and wellbeing issues.
- Seeking to increase members' awareness of sector networking opportunities relevant to health and wellbeing, via a [networks list on the UCEA website](#) and our member events on "getting the most from UCEA membership".

6. Statistics on reportable accidents and injuries

Changes to data collection and future reports

Accident statistics for the HE sector were collated by HESA since 2012-13, via its Estates Management Record (EMR), but only reported by HESA since 2014-15. Prior to that year, USHA collected accident data from its members, which was used by UCEA in the annual Health and Safety reports. Last year, HESA confirmed that, following a consultation, from 2016-17 it would no longer collect the health and safety data in the EMR. Instead USHA would revert to collecting the data from HEIs. For details please see: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/records/reviews/estates-2016-17>.

As such, this, and future, UCEA health and safety reports will be based on USHA data. UCEA is aware that the USHA sample size of HEIs in 2016-17 is smaller than the HESA sample in previous years. It is therefore important to be cautious about making direct year-on-year comparisons this year. However, as HEIs become more aware of the transfer of responsibilities from HESA to USHA, we expect that the response rate to USHA will increase.

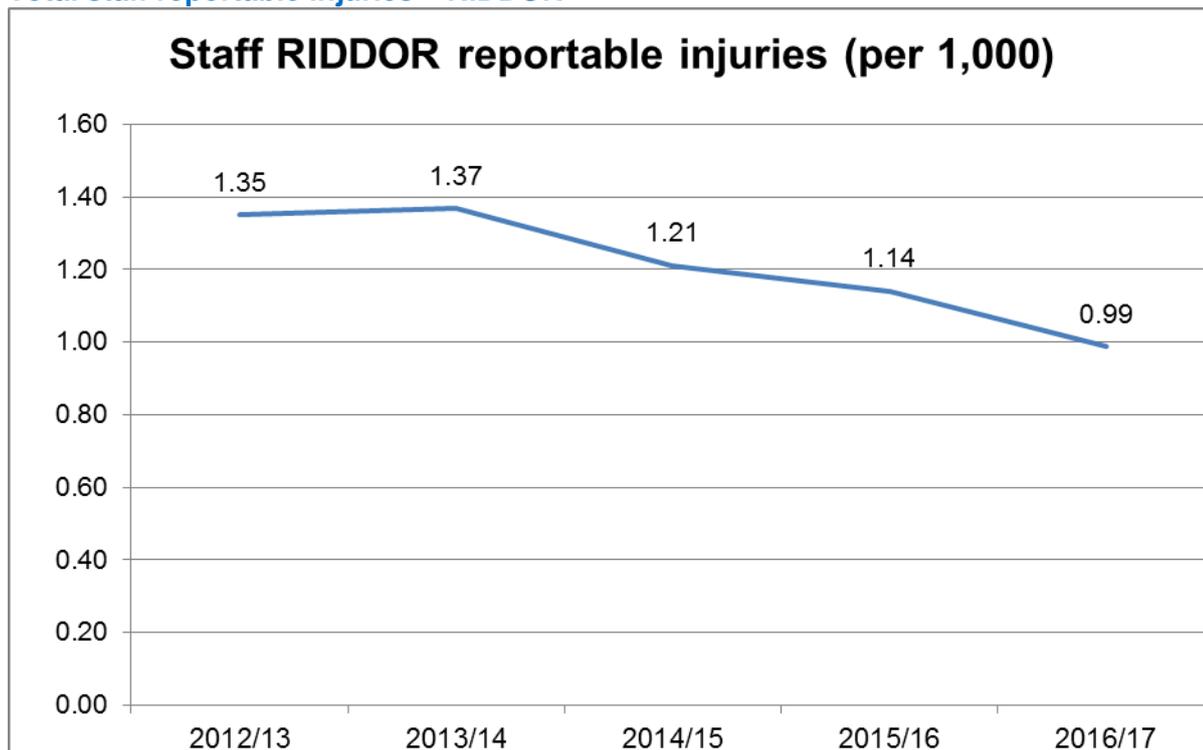
The table below shows that in 2016-17, the number of RIDDOR reportable injuries decreased, both for staff and students; however, as noted above this may be due to the decreased sample size. Data on other dangerous occurrences and student fatalities for 2016-17 is not available.

Summary

Estate Management Record field	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of staff RIDDOR reportable injuries	435	397	380	304
Number of student RIDDOR reportable injuries	220	204	200	116
Total other dangerous occurrences	2,140	2,487	2,705	-
Total number of occupational diseases reportable under RIDDOR	9	9	10	7
Number of staff fatalities	0	1	0	1
Number of student fatalities	1	0	2	-

The graph below shows the reportable accident rate since the 2012-13 academic year for *employees*.

Total staff reportable injuries – RIDDOR



Sources: HESA and USHA

There has been a decline in the rate of staff RIDDOR reportable injuries between since 2013-14. However, HEIS may wish to exercise caution in drawing conclusions from these data given the change in data sources in 2016-17.

The overall reportable accident rate in HE reflects well when compared with the HSE figures of UK-wide accident reporting, which ran at 2.63 per 1,000 employees (injuries reported under RIDDOR) for the period 2016-17 – see the RIDHIST data at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/tables/index.htm#riddor>

7. Statistics on sickness absence in HE 2016-17

UCEA has conducted annual sickness absence surveys for HE since 2012. A summary of some of the headline results from the five surveys – for the academic years 2012-13 to 2016-17 – is presented below. UCEA members can download the full reports of the last two surveys, including detailed data tables in Excel for benchmarking, from the UCEA website at: <http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/empres/rs/sickness-absence-survey/index.cfm>

a) Overall sickness absence levels in HE

Absence measure	2012-13	2013-14*	2014-15*	2015-16*	2016-17*
Mean number of days absence per employee per year	5.5 days	5.5 days	5.7 days	6.0 days	5.8 days
Mean percentage working time lost per year to sickness absence	2.4%	3.0%	2.7%	2.7%	2.6%

These figures are low in comparison to other absence surveys of the wider economy; for example the XpertHR Survey 2017 reported an average of 6.6 days absence per employee across the economy as a whole.

b) Percentage of sickness absence that is long-term

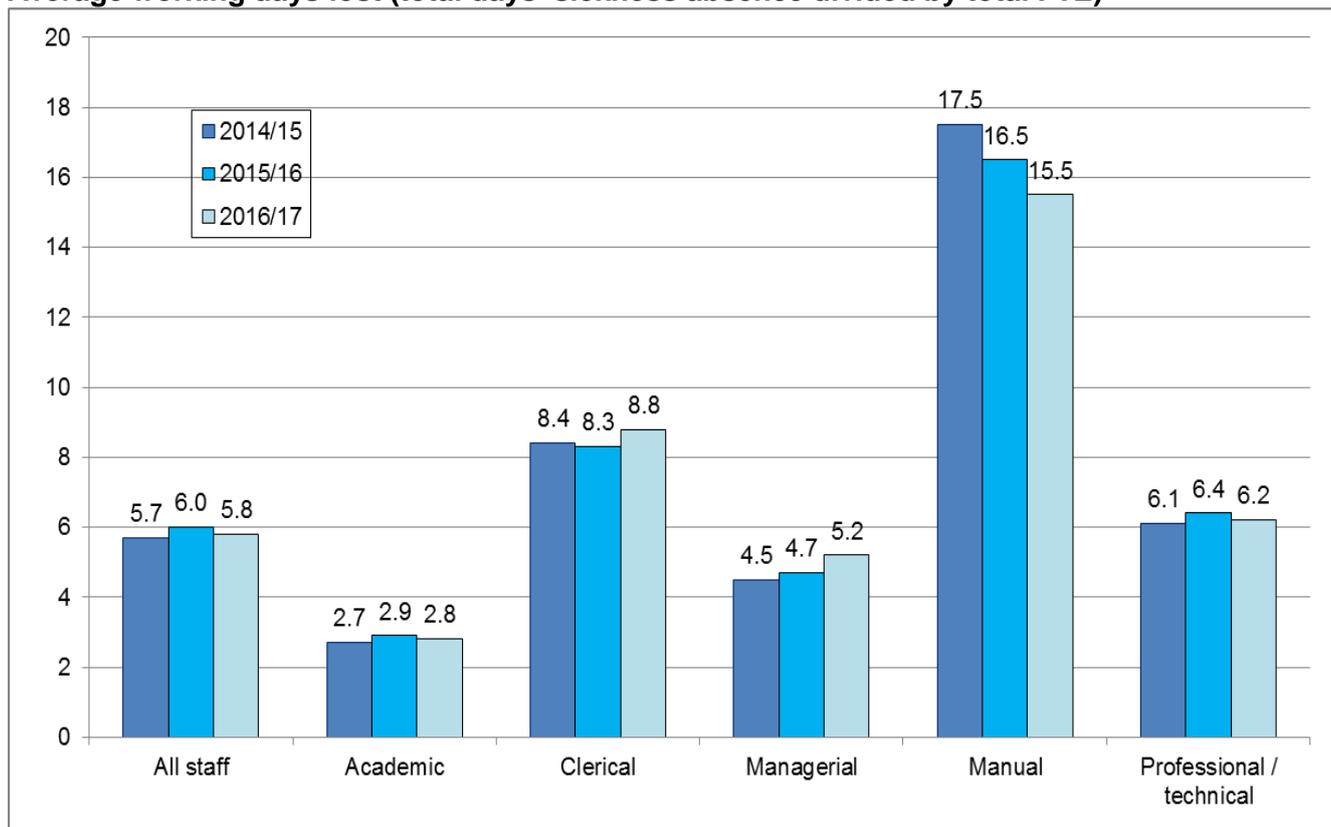
Absence measure	2012-13	2013-14*	2014-15*	2015-16*	2016-17*
Mean percentage of sickness absence which is long-term (over 20 consecutive working days)	48.2%	49.6%	49.6%	52.4%	53.3%

* Since 2013-14 UCEA has collected raw data on employee absences (i.e. the actual numbers of employees and the total number of days of absence rather than averages calculated by HEIs). This has enabled us to provide a more accurate assessment of our usual sickness absence indicators. Figures from 2013-14 onwards are thus calculated by summing up individual data from each HEI and producing sector averages as opposed to an 'average of averages' approach used in previous years.

c) Sickness absence levels by category of staff

Reported levels of absence are higher among manual and clerical staff than among the other staff groups – see the chart overleaf. Manual staff absence rates are more than five times higher than those for academic staff. However, over the last six years over 80 per cent of responding HEIs indicated that they believe that absences are under-reported for academic staff.

Average working days lost (total days' sickness absence divided by total FTE)



Appendix

Full names of Higher Education member associations represented on the UCEA Health and Safety Committee

Acronym	Full name
AHUA	Association of Heads of University Administration
AMOSSHE	The Student Services Organisation (Formerly the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education)
AUDE	Association of University Directors of Estates
AURPO	Association of University Radiation Protection Officers
BUFDG	British Universities Finance Directors Group
CUBO	Colleges and Universities Business Officers
CUC	Committee of University Chairs
GuildHE	
HEOPS	Higher Education Occupational Physicians / Practitioners
MSC	Medical Schools Council
UCEA	Universities and Colleges Employers Association
UHR	Universities Human Resources
USHA	Universities Safety and Health Association
UUK	Universities UK

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