

## A Guide to Safety Declaration for Research Higher Degrees

The University's Safety, Health and Environment Committee is of the view that all research projects involving hazardous materials or equipment should be covered by some form of safety approval or safety declaration.

Some projects of Research higher degrees can involve the use of these hazards. Serious accidents involving research students working in university laboratories around the world in recent years serve to demonstrate that this area can be easily overlooked by both the research students and their supervisors. In order to help the University to cover this area also, a system of Safety Declaration for Research Higher Degrees has been put in place. The system aims to help both the research student and his/her supervisor to systematically look at the risks involved in their project and take proactive steps to control the risks. It also helps the University as a responsible organization to discharge its duty of care for its employees and students. The system requires a research student and his/her supervisor to assess the risks of their project, take the necessary safety precautions and make a Safety Declaration on a specified form as an official record. The following steps should be followed:

- A candidate or student of Research Higher Degree should, jointly with his/her supervisor, decide as early as possible whether a Safety Declaration needs to be made for the project.
- If part or all of the project is likely to be carried out in a laboratory or a workshop (or other facilities where hazardous substances/equipment may be used), a Safety Declaration should be made by the student and endorsed by his/her supervisor before the commencement of the project.
- A Safety Declaration Form (**Form SD1**) available from the Safety Office's homepage should be used.
- The student should complete Part 1 of the Form after discussing with the supervisor. In completing the Form, the student may refer to the ***Information and Guidance on Safety Declaration for Research Higher Degrees*** provided in the Safety Office's homepage. If necessary, the student or the supervisor can approach the Safety Office for specific advice and assistance.
- The Form should then be passed to the supervisor who should endorse it upon ensuring that all measures recorded in the form have been implemented.
- The completed original copy of the Form should be submitted to the Department concerned who should keep it as official record for a period of 3 years upon completion or termination of the project.
- Both the student and the supervisor may each keep a copy of the Declaration for their own reference.
- If a Research Higher Degree project has changed substantially since the Declaration was made, a new Declaration should be made and submitted to the Department.

As a mechanism of helping the University to monitor whether Research Students are observing this safety requirement, staff of the Safety Office may ask to see the Declaration Forms during their safety inspection programmes.