

Work Outside Normal Working Hours

Policy

The University recognizes that work outside normal working hours is an essential component of academic life and does not wish to restrict this unnecessarily. However, to ensure that work is performed safely and in a safe environment and with suitable backup support, departmental supervisory arrangements must be established.

* Normal working hours in this context means
08:30 – 18:00 (Monday – Friday)
08:30 – 13:00 (Saturday)

Responsibilities

Department Heads must:

- ensure that suitable levels of supervision are provided when students work outside normal working hours.

Students should:

- cooperate with the supervisor and work within agreed parameters.

Student Supervisors must:

- ensure adequate risk assessments have been carried out regarding the work to be performed and to ensure agreed arrangements are followed through.
-

Prepared by: Safety Office	Approved by: Safety, Health & Environment Committee	Issue Date: Oct. 2006
Work Outside Normal Working Hours v. 1.1	Page 1 of 4	Review Date: Oct. 2008

Guidance

Hazards

The hazards that are of greatest concern fall into three groups:

1. People becoming trapped in a building by fire when no one is aware of their presence.
2. Work associated hazards generated directly by students/staff themselves.
3. Working alone where, in the event of an emergency, no one is able to give prompt assistance.

Fire

The design and geography of the University of Hong Kong campus and buildings and the existing security arrangements are such that any strict control of people using the buildings is impracticable.

The introduction of a register of persons occupying the building (as is suggested in many University Safety Policies) is unlikely to be effective, as most buildings have several entrances/exits and few have security or commissionaire posts. However, this should not preclude but rather encourage individual departments to make their own security and attendance arrangements.

In the event of a fire alarm, staff/students would need to respond as they should during working hours. In the event of being trapped they should call security to report their position. The Fire Services Department will carry out its standard search

procedures in the absence of confirmation that the building had been cleared.

Work Associated Hazards

Lone Workers

1. **Low Risk – Offices/Computer Workshops/ Drawing Offices/Study Areas/Museums etc.**

Overtime work in these kind of premises does not normally present additional risks to individuals greater than those occurring during normal working hours. However, for 1st and 2nd year undergraduates, a time limit should be agreed. If they know the agreed finishing time, security or departmental staff can check first that the area has been vacated before locking up.

2. **Moderate Risk – Laboratories/ Workshops/ Studios (Architecture, Arts etc.)**

- 2.1 As a general principle 1st and 2nd year students should not be allowed to work in areas such as laboratories, workshops or studios. without staff supervision. This would normally restrict students to normal working hours.
- 2.2 3rd and 4th year undergraduate students of may be permitted to work outside normal working hours, but in such cases specific departmental arrangements need to be made.

Prepared by: Safety Office	Approved by: Safety, Health & Environment Committee	Issue Date: Oct. 2006
Work Outside Normal Working Hours v. 1.1	Page 2 of 4	Review Date: Oct. 2008

3. High Risk

Any operations/experiments likely to pose a higher than normal risk of injury, fire or ill health, should only be permitted during normal hours when assistance is readily available. Departments should identify such high-risk operations and include them in their own safety policy/safety rules/safety guidelines.

4. General

4.1 Students must not be permitted to work alone except in areas that fall into low risk category #1.

4.2 Departments must make suitable arrangements to ensure compliance with these rules. Such arrangements might include:

- (a) Student stewards appointed to control the use of a facility and to ensure safety rules are obeyed.
- (b) Arrangements for 3rd year students to work alongside higher degree students.

Whatever arrangements are made, they should be designed to enable assistance to be given to any injured person quickly.

4.3 In all cases the student supervisor must:

- (a) be aware of the work
- (b) carry out a risk assessment and discuss the potential hazards with the student(s) and

- (c) Only if there is considered to be no undue risk give the student written permission and specify finishing time. Where permission is granted the students need to be made aware of any rules and regulations that appertain to the laboratory, studio, or workshop. These rules need to be written down and adequately communicated by briefing. The student should sign a receipt indicating he understands the requirements and will abide by them.

As part of the regulations a 'penalty' clause should be included so that students are in no doubt that abuse of the rules could result, for example, in withdrawal of facilities or other sanction.

- 4.4 For the purposes of monitoring the arrangements, a departmental register should be maintained and spot checks carried out by departmental staff at intervals to ensure that the procedures are being followed.

Other Categories

1. Research Assistants/ Graduate Research Students/ Post Doctoral Research Staff

Before engaging in work outside normal working hours these staff should discuss with their supervisor the work proposed. Where possible more than one person should be in the vicinity while laboratory work is in progress.

Prepared by: Safety Office	Approved by: Safety, Health & Environment Committee	Issue Date: Oct. 2006
Work Outside Normal Working Hours v. 1.1	Page 3 of 4	Review Date: Oct. 2008

N.B.: Postgraduate students have been identified as a high risk group. Assumptions about their commitment to work safely cannot be taken for granted.

2. Technical Staff

Permission should be sought from the Chief Technician and Head of Department. Attention needs to be given to the experience of technicians and, as for undergraduates, this permission should be granted until the department head is satisfied that the technician is responsible, suitably qualified and has adequate knowledge of safety procedures.

3. Academic/Research Staff

Academic/research staff have responsibilities for the safety of their staff, the students working in their sections, and anyone else likely to be affected by their work or that of their students. Therefore, they need to consider this matter carefully. This applies as much to their own work as to that of their subordinates.

Departmental safety policy will only be successful if staff lead by example and supervise adequately.

Prepared by: Safety Office	Approved by: Safety, Health & Environment Committee	Issue Date: Oct. 2006
Work Outside Normal Working Hours v. 1.1	Page 4 of 4	Review Date: Oct. 2008