


HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GUIDANCE REGISTER		Guidance	G029
 <b>PRIFYSGOL ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>Use of Offices Guidance</b>	Issue	3
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### Introduction

As an employer, we aim to provide a suitable environment to work in, we also have a legal responsibility to take all reasonable steps to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety. As a line manager this means we need to think about the risks employees face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising that it may not be possible to eliminate the risk of all hazards.

This document is intended to provide Faculties and Professional Service Departments with information to plan and utilise their local office spaces.

Please remember that we all share a responsibility to maintain a safe working environment, and by we can help keep each other safe.

### Office Capacity and Layout


- Determine appropriate capacities and layouts of office spaces provide colleagues with a suitable workroom location of 11 cubic meters (11m<sup>3</sup>) as minimum per person. In a typical room, where the ceiling is 2.4 m high, a floor area of 4.6 m<sup>2</sup> (for example 2.0 x 2.3 m) will be needed to provide a space of 11 m<sup>3</sup>. Where the ceiling is 3.0 m high or higher, the minimum floor area will be 3.7 m<sup>2</sup> (for example 2.0 x 1.85 m). (These floor areas are only for illustrative purposes and are approximate.) This will enable physical distancing to be maintained during the working day.
- Workrooms should have enough free space to allow people easy access to and from workstations, to move within the room with ease and not to restrict their movements while performing their work. This includes ceilings being high enough to allow safe access to workstations unless the work is only for a short duration. Obstructions such as low beams should be clearly marked.
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side working can enhance infection control measures, although ensuring the appropriate office space as detailed above will enable face to face working, where necessary.
- Some office locations may have privacy screens already in place which will offer a barriers to separate work locations, if the option is required;

### Ventilation

- Enclosed offices should be sufficiently well ventilated so that stale air, and air which is hot or humid because of the processes or equipment in the workplace, is replaced at a reasonable rate. This can be achieved through natural or mechanical ventilation.
- Ensuring that spaces which have windows, can be and are opened to promote natural ventilation and closed at the end of the working day.
- Where mechanical ventilation systems are in place, those systems have been set to ensure fresh air supply rather than recirculation of air through Estates, Facilities and Residence colleagues. Any defect or damage, should be reported to [campushelp@aber.ac.uk](mailto:campushelp@aber.ac.uk)

### Cleaning and hand hygiene

- Cleaning regimes are in place across the campus including increased cleaning of surfaces which are touched frequently within buildings. Details of the University's cleaning regimes are available at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/efr/facilities/cleaning-portering/>.

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- Back of house areas, including individual and open plan offices, are not cleaned on a set schedule, other than waste management services. Requests for office cleaning or products for self-cleaning can be made by contacting [facilities@aber.ac.uk](mailto:facilities@aber.ac.uk).
- Office cleans are subject to availability of resource, further to completion of servicing front facing communal, learning, social and teaching spaces including enhanced cleaning regimes.
- Some meeting and teaching spaces may not be habitually cleaned at certain times of the year. This is indicated by a temporary notice which will include a contact email should access to these rooms be required, and for users to be able to arrange cleaning beforehand.
- Keeping personal spaces clean and uncluttered using the cleaning products provided in all buildings.
- Storing personal belongings away and minimise loud noises that will require people to shout over them.

### **Use of communal spaces (e.g. staff rooms, kitchens, toilets etc)**

Colleagues are asked to be considerate and responsible in their use of communal spaces by:

- Keeping or storing personal items and clothing in personal storage spaces such as desks and/or lockers;
- Following good hand hygiene practices by washing or sanitising hands before and after using communal spaces;
- Staggering break times to reduce pressure on the staff break rooms, kitchens or places to eat, and when these areas are busy or crowded, waiting for others to leave or make way before entering;
- Clean any touchpoints or touched surfaces (e.g. kettle handle or wall mounted kettle tap, fridge/microwave handles etc) before and after use using the cleaning products provided. Additional supplies of sanitiser or cleaning products can be requested by contacting [facilities@aber.ac.uk](mailto:facilities@aber.ac.uk);
- Encourage and promote use of outdoors areas for welfare breaks;
- Ensuring that spaces have windows which can be and are opened to promote natural ventilation, or where mechanical ventilation systems are in place, that those systems are set to ensure fresh air supply rather than recirculation of air.


### **Equipment and Storage**

Locally owned equipment and accessories should be regularly sorted, adequately stored, re-used, recycled or disposed of, in conjunction with the financial regulations [Section-10---Disposale-of-Fixed-Assets.pdf](#) ([aber.ac.uk](http://aber.ac.uk)).

Equipment and accessories storage should avoid using high shelving options, or obstructing walk ways, doorways, or prevent access to windows or other equipment.

### **Electrical Safety**

Faculties and Professional Service Department should ensure that all electrical equipment has been tested in accordance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) through Portable Appliance Testing according to a planned schedule. The University's Portable Appliance Testing Policy and accompanying

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guidance document provides details of the University's arrangements and expectations in respect of portable appliance testing, which is available via the Health, Safety and Environment Document Library at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/documents/>:

- P010 Portable Appliance Testing Policy;
- G003 Portable Appliance Testing Guidance.

### **Fire Safety**

All building users should be familiar with the arrangements for fire safety and evacuation within their areas of work. Further information is available at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/proc-prac/fire-safety/>. The University's Fire Safety Guidance document provides details of the University's arrangements and expectations in respect of fire safety, which is available via the Health, Safety and Environment Document Library at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/documents/>:

- G016 Fire Safety Guidance

Fire Safety Training is delivered by the Health, Safety and Environment Team, which should be attended by all members of staff. Further information is available at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/training/fire-marshal/>.

The Health and Safety Essentials E-Learning training package also includes a specific training module for 'Fire Safety', which is available to all members of staff via Blackboard, and should be completed periodically by colleagues. Further information is available at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/training/hseessentials/>.


### **Display Screen Equipment**

All habitual users of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) should undertake a VDU assessment in accordance with the University's Display Screen Equipment Policy. This assessment will identify any additional requirements or changes or alterations to existing workstations to prevent work-related upper limb disorders due to the use of display screen equipment. The following documents will provide colleagues with information on suitable arrangements and practices when working with Display Screen Equipment.

- P012 Display Screen Equipment Policy;
- G007 Standing Workstation Equipment Guidance;
- F009 VDU Workstation Checklist;
- F011 DSE Workstation Self-Assessment Form.

These documents are available via the Health, Safety and Environment Document Library at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/documents/>.

To ensure that all colleagues have an awareness and understanding of the requirements of the DSE Regulations and are aware of good practices when setting up their workstations, the Health and Safety Essentials E-Learning training package has a specific training module for 'Working Safely with Computers'. The module is available to all members of staff on Blackboard and should be completed by colleagues who are habitual users of display screen equipment. Further information is available at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/training/hseessentials/>.

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Display screen equipment users should also be encouraged to follow a varied work regime and take regular breaks away from the screen (e.g. a 15 minute break away from the screen after every hour of continuous use).

### **First Aid**

Ensure your staff know where they can access first aid; location of the first aid box and who the nearest first aiders to their work location. More information is available at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/proc-prac/first-aid/>

### **Security**

All staff must wearing of lanyards and identifiable badges in restricted areas whilst at work.

Politely challenging anyone present in areas or tailgating, where they are not familiar and/or whose actions may arouse concern.

### **Monitoring**

A checklist to assist colleagues to review the health and safety arrangements in specified areas, can be found in the document library [here](#) F004 Health and Safety Inspection Checklist.

The list is not exhausted, and bespoke areas (e.g. workshops, laboratories, performance spaces, etc.) will require additional aspects to be considered. It's recommended that the checklist be undertaken at regular intervals (with greater regularity in higher risk areas), and any corrective actions be allocated to individuals in line with specific deadlines and timescales.

### **Further Advice**

For any particular concerns, colleagues should contact the Health, Safety and Environment Team at [hasstaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:hasstaff@aber.ac.uk) for guidance.

Health and Safety Executive:

- [Workplace health, safety and welfare. Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L24 \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)