

Strategy for Fire Safety Management



Document Control

Revision No.	Date Document Reviewed	Publication on Web Site	Date of next Review	Summary of main changes
Draft	June 2016		October 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conversion to new format ○ Checked for legal compliance ○ Minor changes to update terminology or to reflect current practices
1	November 2016	December 2016	November 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Version approved following consultation process.
2	November 2017	November 2017	November 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update of accountabilities and minor terminology changes
3	November 2019	November 2019	November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minor wording changes. Change to annual review
4	November 2020	January 2021	November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Covid-19 restrictions
5	November 2021	May 2022	November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updates to accountabilities and Covid-19 restrictions
6	January 2023	February 2023	January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Covid-19 update ○ Update of accountabilities and minor terminology changes

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Strategy for Fire Safety Management

1 Introduction

1.1 Objective

Glasgow Caledonian University recognises the importance of having a strategy for fire safety management as fire is a hazard which has the potential to be catastrophic for the University. The consequences include threats to lives, damage to or loss of property and severe interruption to normal business activities or opportunities. This strategy has been formulated in order to reduce the potential for fire and also reduce the severity if a fire was to occur.

Fire safety includes preventing outbreaks of fire and mitigating the direct and consequential damages. This is done through early detection, reducing spread by structural containment, providing escape routes, emergency evacuation procedures and means for firefighting. These prevention and protection measures must be appropriate to the building use and occupancy, the inherent fire risk and also the legal obligations of the University as 'employer' or 'occupier of premises'.

This strategy expands on the requirements of the University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy through the creation of fire safety management systems and standards that together with the provision and maintenance of safe buildings, protects human lives and University assets. These are in place to ensure that the University complies with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

1.2 Scope

The strategy applies to all campuses, sites and premises for which Glasgow Caledonian University is the employing authority or occupier. This includes buildings occupied under tenancy agreements. Its requirements shall extend to all persons at those premises including all visitors and contractors.

In premises jointly occupied by the University and others, the fire safety arrangements and procedures of the landlord or host occupier shall apply or local variations agreed by all relevant occupiers.

2 Accountabilities

2.1 General

The legal responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 lies with the University Executive Board as the employing authority and also where the University is in control of a workplace or is the occupier of premises. Specific responsibilities may fall solely on the University Executive Board or jointly with others in shared premises depending on agreements in place with the relevant stakeholders.

2.2 Organisation

The following responsibilities and tasks represent the performance standards required of University officers in the management of fire safety. As with other management responsibilities, it is for the named officer(s) to ensure that the task or outcome is delivered by delegating tasks and functions to others, if required, and monitoring the results.

Principal and Vice Chancellor

The Principal and Vice Chancellor is responsible, on behalf of the University Court, for the fire safety of all premises belonging to or occupied by the university and will ensure:

- that the university has a fire safety strategy;
- that a programme to implement, maintain, monitor and review the strategy is agreed;
- that resources are available for the implementation, maintenance, monitoring and review of the fire safety strategy;

Chief Operating Officer

The Chief Operating Officer will:

- ensure that within agreed corporate annual budget provisions, the funding of capital and maintenance works consistent with this strategy are identified;
- identify and allocate funds for fire risk assessment, fire safety training requirements, the routine maintenance of fire alarms, detection and extinguishing systems and equipment, the marking and maintenance of the means of escape and emergency lighting from all university premises;

Director of Estates and Facilities

The Director of Estates and Facilities will:

- ensure that adequate support and resources are available to effectively implement the fire safety strategy and that this is continuously monitored;
- ensure that the physical estate has adequate fire safety systems and the provision of emergency arrangements in place;

Head of Asset Management

The Head of Asset Management will:

- ensure that fire safety specifications are incorporated in the planning of new build, refurbishment or structural alteration projects in consultation with Building Control Officers and any other stakeholders as appropriate;
- ensure the maintenance of the structure or fabric of university buildings so that any means of escape or egress are not compromised;
- ensure that all fire safety systems and equipment (including fire alarms and emergency lighting) are maintained, inspected and tested by the university's service provider in accordance with any output specification of the project agreement, tenancy agreement or statutory obligation;
- ensure that as-built drawings for each building indicating building fire zones, firefighting shafts, protected and other fire routes, temporary waiting areas, location of detection and extinguishing devices or equipment are provided for inclusion in fire safety plans and that such drawings are kept up to date;
- ensure that proposed alterations to any university building likely to affect the means of escape or other fire safety provisions are properly considered and ensure that the existing risk assessment is reviewed to take account of the proposed alteration in order to enable review of the risk profile for the building as a whole;
- ensure consultation with the planning authorities should the proposed alteration to any university building result in a material change of use, number of occupants or means of escape;
- ensure the maintenance, inspection and testing by competent persons of all fire detection and warning systems, portable extinguishers and fixed firefighting systems, emergency lighting, smoke control systems and any other preventive or protective measures forming part of the building services;
- ensure the provision and fixing of fire safety signs in accordance with any fire risk assessment;
- ensure that any actions identified within the fire risk assessment are investigated and carried out as necessary;
- ensure the uniformity of recognised standards of maintenance, inspection and testing throughout all university premises by the selection and monitoring of competent contractors;
- ensure that contractors are informed of the building fire evacuation procedures and other fire safety provisions before standing work;
- ensure the operation of a written 'permit-to-work' procedure in all operations involving the isolation, removal or disconnection of any fire safety system and due notification of local maintenance supervisors, security managers or halls of residence managers before such work is done;
- ensure the operation of a written 'permit to work' procedure for building maintenance operations involving hot work i.e. welding, flame cutting, use of blow lamps or portable grinding wheels in areas near flammable materials whether done by employees or contractors;

- ensure that inspection and test records and defect reports for all fire safety systems and equipment are kept.

Head of Campus Services

The Head of Campus Services will:

- ensure the provision of advice to University management on all aspects of fire safety including legal duties and fire precautions.
- ensure that fire risk assessments are completed and kept under review;
- ensure the preparation of fire safety plans;
- ensure formulation and organisation of evacuation procedures, fire drills, written organisational emergency plans and fire safety training programmes are in place;
- develop relevant policies, procedures and guidance with approval of the GCU People Committee to define fire safety standards and give practical guidance;
- ensure periodic inspection of university premises and the monitoring of fire risk assessment action plans and other fire safety standards or procedures;
- ensure the review of fire safety plans following changes to building use, means of escape or other relevant fire safety measures;
- ensure that periodic evacuation drills are carried out twice annually and appropriately recorded for all University buildings;
- ensure the review of building risk profiles for all university buildings and incorporate into emergency plan arrangements;
- ensure that the University Executive Board, Principal and Vice Chancellor and Senior Management Team are informed of serious fire risks or other failures of the fire safety management system.
- ensure that procedures are in place for the removal of flammable rubbish and waste (other than that designated as special or hazardous wastes from laboratories) from university buildings and safe storage away from the building and ignition sources whilst awaiting collection;
- ensure that domestic staff, whether employees or contractors, do not store or leave any flammable rubbish or any other waste in escape routes such as corridors, stairways, lobbies or in the vicinity of building fire exits;
- ensure that there is at least a weekly check of the means of escape from university buildings including corridors, stairways and other routes, fire doors and final exits and that deficiencies (including those relating to emergency lighting) are recorded and acted on.;
- appoint members of staff at campus and residences with responsibility for implementing fire safety plans and evacuation procedures;
- ensure the physical security of buildings against intruders and the provision of security staff trained to respond in the event of fire so that during and outside normal working hours they are able to

direct and admit Scottish fire and Rescue Service to all parts of the building and are able to contact nominated university staff;

The Head of Campus Services will delegate duties to competent persons to assist in undertaking the preventative and protective measures and will:

- monitor and review existing fire risk assessments;
- co-ordinate and assist in the formulation and organisation of evacuation procedures and drills and fire safety training programmes for Fire Wardens and other staff;
- assist in the development of relevant policies, procedures and guidance documents to define fire safety standards;
- provide practical advice and guidance on all aspects of fire safety;
- coordinate and assist in the preparation of fire safety plans;
- undertake periodic inspection of university premises, fire safety systems and equipment;
- monitor the implementation of fire safety plans and other fire safety standards or procedures;
- review fire safety plans following changes to building use, means of escape or other relevant fire safety measures;
- assist in the review of building risk profiles for all university buildings;

Deans of School and Heads of Service/Department

Deans of School and Heads of Service/Department will:

- ensure that rooms are only used for the purpose that they are designed for so that there is no increase in fire risk e.g. through overcrowding, re-arrangement of furniture, excessive or insecure storage of flammable or explosive materials or use of naked flames;
- ensure that risk assessments of activities or processes under their control or direction identify fire hazards and implement precautions to avoid where reasonably practicable the risk of fire;
- make arrangements to ensure that fire prevention and protective or other controls identified by the risk assessment are made available, properly used and maintained if these are additional to those provided generally for safety of the building and its occupants;
- ensure the safe and secure storage of highly flammable liquids and flammables, combustible gases, other substances and similar hazardous wastes where necessary, in accordance with the DSEAR Regulations;
- ensure that corridors, stairways, lobbies and exits remain unobstructed at all times. No equipment, furniture, display material, goods, packaging material or waste products or other items to be located in circulation routes within or from any part of their School/Service/Department comprising a protected or designated means of escape;

- ensure that any contractors or visitors engaged by their School/Service/Department/ are informed of particular fire risks in areas where they may work, given instructions on fire evacuation procedures and arrangements for hot work or other permits are made through Estates;
- nominate sufficient members of staff as fire wardens to assist in the evacuation of their School/Service/Department during normal office hours and ensure that they undertake fire warden refresher training as required.
- Where fire wardens are not available due to flexible working arrangements, local arrangements should be in place for an appointed person to undertake the role of sweeping the floor during a fire alarm activation;
- ensure that new staff are provided with emergency evacuation instructions, building escape routes and assembly areas and other relevant fire safety procedures detailed in the fire safety plan for the building;
- ensure that students, researchers, residents and visitors are instructed on fire evacuation procedures, evacuation routes, assembly areas and other fire prevention and protective measures appropriate to their building or area, e.g. as written rules or verbal instructions.
- Ensure that a PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) has been carried out for any staff/students in their department that require assistance to evacuate in an emergency. The plan explains the method of evacuation to be used by the person in each area of a building.

All Staff

All staff will:

- ensure that rooms are only used for the purpose that they are designed for so that there is no increase in fire risk e.g. through overcrowding, re-arrangement of furniture, excessive or insecure storage of flammable or explosive materials or use of naked flames;
- make themselves aware of what to do in an emergency situation and cooperate with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, fire wardens and Estates and Facilities staff to ensure the effectiveness of the fire evacuation procedures;
- make themselves aware of the location of fire alarm activation call points, escape routes and final exits;
- bring to the attention of the Estates and Facilities any defects or deficiencies in fire safety arrangements including failure of any detection or warning device, fire door or final exit door or obstructed escape route;
- immediately activate the nearest manual call point and inform security if they discover a fire;
- not attempt to extinguish a fire unless trained to do so or if they or others would be at personal risk;
- instruct and assist students and other visitors so that they leave the building safely and promptly;
- ensure that visitors or visiting groups at conferences, external lectures and similar events under their organisation are instructed in the fire evacuation procedures;

All Contractors

All contractors will:

- make themselves aware of what to do in an emergency situation and cooperate with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, fire wardens and Estates and Facilities staff to ensure the effectiveness of the fire evacuation procedures;
- sign in and out of the University at the security office and have received an induction from Estates and Facilities;
- ensure permit to work procedure is followed through Estates for works involving hot work i.e. welding, flame cutting, use of blow lamps or portable grinding wheels in areas near flammable materials whether done by employees or contractors;
- ensure that corridors, stairways, lobbies and exits remain unobstructed at all times whilst carrying out their works.

3 Aim of the Strategy

The aim of this fire safety management strategy is to detail the measures that the university implements in order to provide a safe environment for all staff, students, visitors and members of the public. The primary focus of this strategy is the provision and maintenance of fire safety systems to ensure that in the event of a fire, the occupants are able to reach a place of safety whilst preventing the spread of the fire.

The key areas of fire safety management that must be implemented as part of this strategy are:

- The creation of standards and procedures for fire safety throughout the university;
- The allocation of responsibilities and duties for fire risk assessment and fire management which must incorporate the principles of prevention, active and passive protection and emergency response;
- The identification through risk assessment of the standard of means of escape, fire alarm systems and extinguishing methodology in university buildings in relation to the occupation levels and building use to achieve safe evacuation;
- The allocation and definition of responsibilities and standards for the provision, installation, testing and planned maintenance of fire safety equipment, devices, alarms and extinguishing systems;
- The identification of standards for the control of combustible, flammable or explosive materials;
- The allocation of responsibilities for the implementation of fire emergency plans including evacuation procedures, first-aid, firefighting, contacting the emergency services, emergency co-ordination and staff training;
- The allocation of responsibilities and duties of staff for monitoring and auditing all fire safety management systems and procedures;
- The development and delivery of suitable staff training in fire safety awareness and fire warden training to ensure sufficient numbers of fire wardens;
- The development and implementation of emergency procedures to ensure minimal damage and disruption from an unforeseen incident involving fire and allow an early recovery from the incident and enable operations to continue. Achieving these objectives will ensure compliance with fire safety and related legislation and current best practice across similar organisations.

4 Procedures

4.1 Building Requirements

The University is committed to providing an estate which meets the required fire safety standards for all buildings. This is in order to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff, students, visitors, contractors and building users. Through meeting these standards, it will help to protect university assets, business activities and reduce the potential impact of fire. For each building, the university shall:

- provide and maintain passive and active fire protection measures according to the purpose and use of the building, the number of occupants and the activities or processes undertaken therein;
- carry out a fire risk assessment to assess fire risks from the building and processes within, the existing preventive and protective measures and identify areas for improvement;
- carry out fire risk assessments within the recommended reassessment timescales;
- prepare a specification identifying the technical requirements for fire safety in accordance with the fire risk assessment;
- establish a programme of works to improve or maintain the existing fire safety specifications;
- prepare and keep under review building specific fire safety plans;
- establish clear lines of responsibility and authority for the day-to-day fire safety management;
- identify competent persons to be present at all times the building is occupied with responsibility for initiating the fire evacuation procedure and provide information and assistance to the fire service;
- carry out periodic checks of the fire safety measures and monitor the fire safety standards against any fire risk assessment;
- ensure that suitable and sufficient safety arrangements are in place for all accessible areas including plant rooms, boiler houses and roof top areas.

4.2 Fire Safety Specifications

Technical specifications for the means of escape for each university building including travel distance, fire-resistance and compartmentation requirements shall be identified by fire risk assessment. The risk assessment shall incorporate the building construction and layout, process fire risks and the use and maximum building occupation numbers. It must also include consideration for location of the occupants, their familiarity with the means of escape and their mobility.

Every University premise shall have a fire alarm system installed with automatic fire detection. It shall be inspected and serviced at least annually by a competent person;

Automatic fire detection shall be provided for property protection in areas of high fire or life risk such as store rooms containing highly flammable materials, computer installations, electrical switch-gear, telecommunications rooms, archive rooms, sleeping areas and accommodation;

Routine servicing or replacement of any part of the fire detection system that could temporarily reduce its effectiveness when the building is occupied shall be done in accordance with a written permit-to-work that expressly identifies the measures to be put in place by the Director of Estates and Facilities to ensure life safety during the period of the work;

The consequences of unintentional failure or partial failure of any life or property protection system leading to temporary loss of effectiveness shall be assessed and appropriate measures put in place by the Director of Estates and Facilities;

Appropriate portable fire extinguishers shall be provided in each university building depending on the relevant fire risks;

All portable fire extinguishers shall be inspected and serviced at least annually by a competent person. Extinguishers found to be unserviceable shall be replaced immediately. Discharged and partly discharged extinguishers shall be returned to estates for replacement after use;

University buildings shall be fitted with emergency escape lighting where required to enable occupants to locate, move safely along and escape from a final exit. All emergency escape lighting systems shall be inspected and serviced by a competent person at least annually. Defective bulbs shall be replaced as soon as practicable.

4.3 Storage of Flammable Substances

Store rooms and similar areas used to keep highly flammable liquids, petroleum spirit, combustible gases and related waste materials shall, in accordance with the fire risk assessment, be segregated from other parts of the building by an appropriate combination of distance and non-combustible fire-resisting structures.

Cylinders of compressed or liquefied flammable or explosive gases such as acetylene, hydrogen and LPG (propane) shall be kept in the open air in a store designed and constructed in accordance with relevant standards. Cylinders of such gases in use within university buildings should be kept within the buildings for as short a time period as possible and have appropriate signage on entry doors.

All areas used for storage of or processes involving high-risk flammable substances will be subject to risk assessment under the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2005.

All areas used for storage or processes involving high-risk flammable substances shall have sufficient natural or mechanical ventilation to prevent the formation of flammable or explosive atmospheres. Building and experimental equipment and apparatus shall be designed, assembled and operated in accordance to prevent, or where this is not reasonably practicable, to adequately reduce the risk of fire in accordance with any risk assessment.

4.4 Fire Safety Training

University staff must be provided with information and training on fire prevention, protection requirements and action to be taken in the event of fire. New members of staff shall be given information or training on:

- the University's fire safety strategy and their personal responsibilities to prevent and protect against outbreaks of fire;
- what action to take if they discover a fire;
- how to raise the alarm, the location of manual call points and the procedure for contacting the Fire Service;
- what action to take immediately on hearing the fire alarm;
- the location and safe use of fire extinguishing equipment;
- the location of escape routes from their place of work including those routes not used regularly for normal access and egress;
- their responsibility to direct or escort students, visitors and members of the public in their charge to escape routes (and in the case of those with PEEPS, to the nearest temporary waiting area);
- the importance of keeping closed all fire doors to limit the spread of fire, heat or smoke;
- how to safely isolate or shutdown process plant or equipment, where appropriate,
- Importance of good housekeeping in preventing the outbreak of fire and limiting its effects.

University staff shall be given basic fire safety information and training covering the above elements during their first week of employment by their immediate supervisor, line manager or local health and safety coordinator or other nominated person.

Students in halls of residence shall be given information and instruction on the day of their arrival in halls be issued with written instructions relating to fire safety.

Schools/Services/Departments shall ensure that their students are given fire safety instructions and information relating to the building or premises that they occupy and any work process or activity that creates a risk of fire.

Fire safety instructions and information relevant to each university building shall be displayed as appropriate i.e. adjacent to fire call points, at building entrances and in staff/student handbooks.

Fire safety and emergency information for visitors and contractors shall be provided during their site induction;

Estates and Facilities staff including maintenance staff, security officers, receptionists and any other staff who have specific responsibilities under this fire safety strategy including fire wardens will be given additional instruction and training appropriate to their role.

Training will be provided by People Services in conjunction with the Head of Campus Services.

Staff who carry out fire risk assessment should be provided with sufficient information and training as required to ensure their competence.

4.5 Fire Evacuation Procedures

A fire evacuation procedure shall be developed for each university building covering the following:

- Action on discovery of fire
- Warning and evacuation signals
- Calling the Fire Service
- Fire fighting
- Evacuation procedure
- Assembly areas
- Evacuation of non-ambulant persons and others with mobility or sensory difficulties
- Crowd management
- Re-admission to the building

Fire action notices shall be provided throughout each building adjacent to each manual call point and in rooms for sleeping accommodation providing information on the evacuation procedure including fire assembly points;

Security, estates, fire wardens and other duty staff shall be available to prevent unauthorised access or re-entry to the building;

Security, estates, fire wardens and other duty staff that supervise the building evacuation shall be identifiable by uniform, high visibility jacket, lanyard or similar means and have access to loud hailers to assist in crowd control if required;

Fire evacuation procedures in every university building shall be tested and rehearsed by fire drills or activations twice yearly so that occupants are periodically made aware of the evacuation signal, escape routes and assembly areas. Fire drills shall be organised by the Director of Estates and monitored by the Head of Campus Services to identify and remedy any deficiency;

Fire alarms in every university building shall be tested weekly and recorded by Maintenance Supervisors.

4.6 Disabled Persons

The University's buildings shall be designed and constructed so as to be available without discrimination against disabled people including those that have impaired mobility, vision or hearing subject to the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010.

The fire risk assessment for each building shall explicitly consider the means of escape, means of giving warning and other fire safety provisions in relation to the needs of mobility or sensory impaired or disabled staff, students, visitors and members of the general public. Persons should be able to identify the fire alarm signal, leave the building safely without risk to themselves and others or remain in a temporary waiting area or fire protected compartment. Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPS)

for individual staff/students that require assistance shall be developed by the school/department. Further information can be found within the dedicated GCU PEEPs Guidance Document.

4.7 Fire Safety Plans

A fire safety plan for each university building shall be coordinated by Estates and Facilities. The plan shall contain the following information:

- The fire evacuation procedure;
- the results of the fire risk assessment identifying the building use, occupancy, building and process fire risks;
- scale drawings of the building identifying the fire zones and compartmentation, levels of fire-resistance, protected escape routes, firefighting shafts and fireman's lifts, fire doors, location of detection devices, alarm call points, fixed and portable fire extinguishers and location and type of fire safety signs. Plans shall be marked to indicate rooms or areas of particular fire or other hazard and assembly areas;
- action plan of any fire safety audit and programme of works to remedy defects and deficiencies.

The Head of Campus Services shall be responsible for implementing the fire safety plan. The plan should be retained electronically and within emergency bags for inspection and use as required.