

## University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

### 1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

#### 1.1 Purpose

This Policy provides the framework to allow University of Sussex staff, students, contractors, interns, and visitors to undertake their activities safely and without detriment to their health, safety, or wellbeing and in compliance with the University's statutory responsibilities for health and safety.

#### 1.2 Statement from the Vice-Chancellor

At the University of Sussex, we strive to deliver excellence in everything we do. Our success and distinctiveness are defined through our institutional values of collaboration, courage, inclusion, integrity, and kindness, which underpin our education, research, and engagement activities.

In support of these institutional values, the University of Sussex seeks to protect and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone who may be affected by University activities. We will take all reasonably practicable steps necessary to ensure that the appropriate protections and safeguards are in place.

As an institution we recognise our legal and ethical responsibilities for the health, safety, and wellbeing of our staff, students, and visitors. At Sussex, compliance with statutory obligations is the minimum expected standard for all activities undertaken on behalf of the University.

Every member of staff has a duty to bring to the attention of the University, as their employer, any real or suspected failings in current safety arrangements, and we welcome suggestions for improvements to these arrangements.



Professor Sasha Roseneil  
Vice-Chancellor & President

## **2. SCOPE**

- 2.1** This Policy applies to all staff, students, contractors (external parties that provide a service to or on the behalf of the University), interns, and visitors. These are collectively referred to as 'members' in the Policy. This Policy does not cover third parties (described in section 3.16.)
- 2.2** This Policy applies to all University of Sussex activities undertaken by individuals as part of their work, research or education, including travel on University business.
- 2.3** This Policy applies to all facilities operated by the University of Sussex, including on its Falmer Campus and at other sites in the United Kingdom or abroad (where additionally, local legislative requirements and policies might apply).

## **3. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 University Council**

Ultimate responsibility for health and safety rests with Council, as the governing body of the University. To provide Council with assurance it receives an Annual Report from the University's Health & Safety Committee on current safety standards and plans to address any areas of concern. The annual Health and Safety assurance report is first considered by Council's Audit and Risk Committee, before being presented to Council.

Day-to-day governance and management of the University is delegated to the Vice-Chancellor and the University Executive Team.

### **3.2 Vice-Chancellor**

The Vice-Chancellor is a member of the University Council and is accountable to Council for the health and safety performance of the University.

### **3.3 University Executive Team (UET)**

UET advises and supports the Vice-Chancellor in the day-to-day running of the University. UET is responsible for ensuring that Schools and Professional Services Divisions have adequate resources to meet their operational objectives and targets in a safe manner.

The UET 'Risk Management Board' receives termly reports on health and safety matters from the University Health and Safety Committee.

### **3.4 Chair of the University's Health and Safety Committee**

The Chair of the Health and Safety Committee is appointed by the Vice-Chancellor and provides recommendations to the Risk Management Board on the University's Health and Safety strategy and related plans and provides assurance to Council on safety performance.

The Chair will seek assurance on health and safety operational plans and will take such action deemed necessary to improve standards. Assurance and necessary improvements are achieved by appointing Safety Sub-Committee Chairs, who are empowered to act in the Chair of the Health and Safety Committee's stead on safety matters within the remit of the Sub-Committee. For details of the Health and Safety Committee structure please see appendix 4. The Chair shall undertake a review of the effectiveness of current committee structures every 3 years.

### **3.5 Health and Safety Committee**

The purpose of the Health & Safety Committee is to promote a positive health and safety culture within the University.

This includes acting as a consultative body for recognised Trade Union representatives, consulting on Safety Strategic Plans, advising the University on health and safety matters and taking all reasonable measures required to ensure the health and safety of University members.

The Committee has oversight of compliance matters relating to the University estate and audit/inspection programmes, and will seek assurance that health and safety arrangements remain effective

The Committee reports to the Risk Management Board and full terms of reference for this Committee are available in "The Organisation of the University" document.

### **3.6 Health and Safety Sub Committees**

To provide oversight and assurance in specialised areas of health and safety, a 'Fire Safety Sub Committee', 'Hazardous Materials Safety Sub Committee' and a 'Radiation Safety Sub Committee' are established. These sub-committees provide assurance reports at each University Health and Safety Committee meeting, and Terms of Reference are provided in the "Organisation of the University" document.

### **3.7 School or Divisional Safety Committees**

Schools or Divisional Safety Committees are in place to provide oversight and assurance within the relevant area of the University and are required to report to the University Health and Safety Committee annually. Terms of Reference are provided in the "Organisation of the University" document.

### **3.8 Heads of School and Directors of Professional Service Divisions**

Heads of School and Directors of Professional Service Divisions are responsible for implementing the University's Health & Safety Policy within their School or Division. They must set out their own local arrangements for safety management.

Local arrangements shall include ensuring that appropriate information is provided to individuals that may be affected by the activities of the School or Division, as well as ensuring

the provision of appropriate equipment, knowledge, time, communication, training and supervision. In addition to the above, the Head of School/ Professional Service Director will:

- i) Ensure that a suitable register of the health and safety risks within their School or Division is in place and that risk assessments are in place for activities where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury or ill health.
- ii) Appoint a suitable Safety Coordinator or Coordinators to manage local safety risks and appoint individuals with technical knowledge to cover specific hazards present within their local unit/ School/ Division, including but not limited to: Biological Safety Officers, Radiation Protection Supervisors and/or laboratory/workshop supervisors.
- iii) Ensure that their staff have adequate resources and training to carry out their assigned duties safely.
- iv) Chair the School or Divisional Safety Committee and where required appoint a suitable deputy chair to act in their stead.

### **3.9 Directors with Specific Responsibilities**

In addition to the above, the following Directors have specific responsibilities for health, safety, and wellbeing:

#### **i) Director of Human Resources**

The Director of Human Resources has operational responsibility for the Health and Safety Team and ensuring sufficient resources are allocated to maintain a sufficient health and safety service and the delivery of a programme of assurance activity (audits and inspections).

They are also responsible for the University's provision of Occupational Health services, monitoring and promoting staff physical and mental wellbeing.

#### **ii) General Counsel and Director of Governance and Compliance**

The General Counsel and Director of Governance and Compliance will provide specialist legal advice relating to compliance with health and safety legislation and statutory requirements and work closely with the Health and Safety Team, to ensure a holistic approach to health and safety as it relates to risk management and Business Continuity.

#### **iii) Director of Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services**

The Director of Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services is responsible for ensuring that the work and maintenance regimes of any partners or contractors employed by the University meet the University's safety standards.

They are also responsible for ensuring any Estates related works and services commissioned directly by the University, meet all relevant health and safety statutory requirements, and the necessary resources are provided to ensure staff can carry out their duties safely.

The Director of Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services will work closely with the Health and Safety Team to ensure a holistic approach to health and safety as it relate to construction and facilities management safety.

### **3.10 Head of Health & Safety**

The Head of Health and Safety is responsible for the daily operations of the Health and Safety Team and must ensure suitable levels of competency with the Safety team. The Head of Health and Safety will:

- i) Develop and maintain the University's health and safety policies, standards, guidance, and training programmes.
- ii) Manage a team of safety advisers who will assist members of the University in identifying and controlling risk.
- iii) Maintain an incident reporting system, review incident trends, and identify any lessons that can be learned from incidents.
- iv) On behalf of University management, oversee a health and safety risk register which reflects University activities.
- v) Monitor health and safety performance and compliance across the University.
- vi) Establish networks for the exchange of good practice both internally and externally.
- vii) Liaise with Human Resources colleagues, Occupational Health Services, and recognised Trade Union Safety representatives on relevant matters.
- viii) Investigate and report on relevant matters to regulatory bodies.
- ix) Oversee the University health and safety audit and inspection programmes.
- x) Monitor changes to health and safety legislation and best practice and interpret, deliver, and communicate these changes to staff.

### **3.11 Associate Director of Technical Operations**

The Associate Director of Technical Operations has the operational responsibility for the Science Schools Health and Safety Team and works closely with the Health and Safety Team to ensure a holistic approach to health and safety as it relate to laboratory safety.

### **3.12 Safety Co-ordinators**

Safety Co-ordinators are appointed by the Head of School or Professional Service Director. They duly act under such authority regarding compliance with safety standards. The duties of individual coordinators will vary depending upon the School or Division but should include:

- i) Managing local safety arrangements.
- ii) Carrying out checks and or inspections.
- iii) Providing regular updates to the Head of School or Professional Service Director.

The suitability of the duties assigned to individual Safety Co-ordinators should be assessed in consultation with the University's Health and Safety Team who oversee the induction of new Safety Co-ordinators and who facilitate networking and development opportunities.

### **3.13 Supervisors/Line Managers/Principal Investigators/Group Leaders/Subject Heads**

Staff in supervisory positions have a health and safety obligation for individuals operating under their instructions, including students who operate in areas they control.

This obligation includes ensuring that individuals acting under their instruction or supervision have received sufficient relevant safety information/training for the tasks being undertaken and that all activities where there is an identifiable risk of injury or ill-health are managed through an appropriate risk assessment.

Additionally, the post holders named above must ensure that local safety procedures meet the University's standards as outlined in specific University Health and Safety Policy/Guidance governing specific hazards. These can be found on the Health and Safety section of the University Website.

### **3.14 All Staff, Students, Contractors including SEF Staff and Visitors**

Every individual has the responsibility to:

- i) Take all reasonable steps to ensure their own health and safety.
- ii) Take due care and consideration of the safety of others that may be affected by their actions or omissions (i.e. what they failed to do).
- iii) Not misuse or interfere with equipment or facilities in place to ensure their safety or the safety of others.
- iv) Comply with University policies and standards including timely completion of all mandatory training.
- v) Comply with all local safety arrangements.
- vi) Stop work where there is an uncontrolled safety risk which they reasonably consider has the potential to result in serious injury or harm.
- vii) Bring any health or safety issues to the attention of their line manager or the Health and Safety Team and use the accident/near miss reporting system as appropriate.

Staff and students acting in a manner that poses a risk to their safety or the safety of others may be subject to improvement programmes and or disciplinary action. Individuals who are not members of the University of Sussex deemed to be acting in a manner that poses a risk to their safety or the safety of others may be asked to leave site.

### **3.15 Students' Union**

As an independent body the Students' Union is responsible for ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of its staff and for ensuring that all activities and events organised by the Students' Union are carried out in a safe manner. The Students' Union must maintain its own health and safety policy and safety management structures (although the safety of University buildings remains the responsibility of the University).

In recognition of the partnership with the Students' Union, and the shared commitment to maintaining high standards of health and safety in all activities associated with the University, the University of Sussex offers support to the Students' Union by the Health and Safety team and details of these services are outline in Appendix 2. Where specialist expertise is required that is not available from the University Health and Safety Team the Student Union shall source suitable competent advice. While occupying University buildings the Students' Union must comply with University's Health & Safety policies and inform the University in good time of any event or activity that could disrupt the functions of the University. The relationship between the University and the Students' Union is managed at the University Union Relations Committee.

To ensure an ongoing collaborative approach to improving health and safety standards and compliance, the Students' Union are asked to assign a representative of the Students' Union with responsibility for the management of health and safety, to be the main point of contact with the University of Sussex where the Head of Health and Safety will be the University of Sussex main point of contact.

### **3.16 University Subsidiaries and Third Parties in Falmer Campus**

As is common practice in universities, the University of Sussex has established a number of corporate entities to carry out trading activities.

Where the University has subsidiaries they will, where applicable, be bound by the University of Sussex Health and Safety Policy unless the University agrees a subsidiary should have its own policy.

Third parties (including but not limited to Study Group, the Institute of Development Studies, Chartwells, Co-Op and Co-Op Nursery) are required to provide a current copy of their Health and Safety Policy to Legal Services within General Council, Governance and Compliance (GCGC.)

All subsidiaries and third parties on Falmer Campus are required to co-operate and co-ordinate with the University and provide any necessary health and safety information to ensure the safety of all persons on site, as required under regulation 11 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

### **3.17 Collaborations and Contractual Relationships**

Collaborators from other institutions operating in the University of Sussex's facilities, or Sussex staff operating in facilities controlled by other institutions, must comply with local safety rules and procedures.

Formal partnerships managed by a contract should include appropriate reference to the safety responsibilities of the relevant parties. This includes partnerships relating to construction projects, research, and delivery of services or lease agreements.

## **4. POLICY**

### **4.1 Health & Safety**

The University of Sussex is committed to providing excellent health and safety standards and to driving a programme of continuous improvement in its safety culture. Compliance with legal requirements is the minimum expected standard.

To achieve this the University shall:

- i) Provide leadership, resources and consider the safety implications arising from operational or strategic decisions.
- ii) Ensure hazards associated with the work of the University are identified, and responsibilities for management and mitigation are clear.
- iii) Provide clear information, instruction, training, and supervision to enable safe working arrangements.
- iv) Maintain suitable risk control systems and measuring metrics.
- v) Inform and consult employees and their representatives on health and safety matters.
- vi) Take such actions identified as necessary by monitoring incident investigations.
- vii) Maintain a separate Fire Safety Policy.

The University recognises that failures in health and safety management have the potential to lead to serious injuries including loss of life. It is committed to taking all reasonable precautions to mitigate the likelihood and severity of any potential accident.

For more details on how the University manages Health & Safety please see the Health & Safety section of the University of Sussex's Website. For organisational charts relating to Health & Safety see appendix 4.

### **4.2 Staff Wellbeing**

The University of Sussex is committed to ensuring that all members of the University have support available to assist them in maintaining their physical and psychological wellbeing. Support can be accessed via:

- i) Referral to the University's independent Occupational Health Services provider.
- ii) Self-referral to the Employee Assistance Programme which provide access to confidential counselling, specialist advice to support physical, financial and mental wellbeing.

- iii) A staff wellbeing hub hosted on university website.
- iv) Mental Health First Aid Network and a Menopause Network.

In instances where an individual disagrees with their line manager regarding wellbeing or Occupational Health support, the University's Human Resources Division should be contacted. A list of Human Resources contacts for each School or Division is available on the Human Resources website.

### **4.3 Student Personal Safety and Wellbeing**

Support services for student health, safety and wellbeing are overseen by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education & Students).

The Division for the Student Experience provides services for students including:

- i) Support for students with a disability or long-term health condition.
- ii) Wellbeing, counselling, general health and mental health information/advice.
- iii) Campus and residential support (pastoral, welfare, disciplinary and social).
- iv) Chaplaincy.
- v) Co-ordination of support for students at particular risk.

The on-site Health Centre provides the services of an NHS general practice to students.

Information on health, safety, fire safety, security and how to access welfare services is made available to all students. Information on how to access these services is available on the 'support services' section of the Student Hub on the University of Sussex's Website.

### **4.4 Occupational Health**

Occupational Health services at the University of Sussex are provided by an external provider. This provision includes:

- i) Pre-employment assessments for staff.
- ii) Health Surveillance for Research<sup>1</sup> students and staff.
- iii) Vaccinations or immunisations for Research students and staff.
- iv) Professional advice on work related ill health.
- v) Tracking and reporting trends relating to workplace injury and referrals.
- vi) Working with Human Resources Teams and line managers in rehabilitation and return to work programmes.
- vii) Assisting in the risk assessment for new employees.
- viii) Informing the Health and Safety Team of reportable work-related ill health.
- ix) Promoting health, safety, and wellbeing within the University.

The Occupational Health service is independent from Schools or Divisions and is available to all members of staff. Where, due to the nature of the individual's work, health surveillance is

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 3 for definition.

required it is the responsibility of the individual's line manager to ensure that this is in place. The University's Health and Safety Team can provide advice as to the circumstances when this may be required.

#### **4.5 Insurance**

The University's insurers have an active interest in how the University manages health and safety; as such they carry out periodic surveys of facilities and may make recommendations for improvements. The Insurers expect serious accidents and incidents to be investigated by the University and that findings are made available to them upon request.

### **5 LEGISLATION AND GOOD PRACTICE**

#### **5.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA1974)**

The HSWA1974 places a duty on an employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees and others (including students and visitors) who may be affected by its acts or omissions. This includes the provision and maintenance of safe plant, machinery, equipment, and safe systems of work. Although ultimate responsibility for compliance rests with employers, every employee has a responsibility to ensure that no one is harmed because of their acts or omissions during the course of their work.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), with local authorities (and other enforcing authorities), is responsible for enforcing the HSWA1974 and a number of other Acts and Statutory Instruments relevant to the working environment.

Under the HSWA1974, there are a suite of specific regulations related to provisions for health, safety, and welfare at work. These are not all listed here; however, the University is committed to meet its statutory duties under these regulations.

#### **5.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

These Regulations require an employer to suitably assess work-based activities and implement any appropriate controls to manage potential risks to the health, safety and welfare of employees and others (including students and visitors.)

Breach of these legal duties can constitute a criminal offence and could lead to prosecution, resulting in a fine and/or a term of imprisonment.

#### **5.3 Related University Policies**

Health and Safety related policies including Fire Safety are maintained by the Health and Safety Team and are available on the [Health and Safety Section](#) of the University of Sussex Webpages. 'People' related policies are maintained by Human Resources and are available on the [Human Resources webpages](#).

Review / Contacts / References	
Policy title:	University of Sussex Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy
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Last review date:	July 2021
Revision history:	Version 1.1, 1.2
Next review date:	March 2027
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	<a href="http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hso/governance">www.sussex.ac.uk/hso/governance</a>
Policy owner:	<i>Executive Director, HR Division</i>
Lead contact / author:	<i>Head of Health and Safety</i>

## Appendix 1                      Named Safety Roles within the University

This is not a comprehensive list of all roles associated with safety management at the University. There are other individuals with specialist safety functions appointed by some Heads of School or Professional Service Directors dependent upon the type of work or research undertaken, such as Laser Safety Officers (LSOs) and Radiation Protection Supervisors (RPSs).

**Radiation Protection Officer** is responsible for:

- i) Advising on the observance of the Ionising and non-ionising radiation regulations.
- ii) Advising and assisting members of the University on matters relating to the use of ionising and non-ionising radiation.
- iii) Overseeing compliance with permits issued by the Environment Agency for the use of radioactive material or work carried out under a relevant exemption.
- iv) Responding to incidents or near misses involving ionising and non-ionising radiation and investigating the cause/ recommended actions to mitigate and prevent a reoccurrence.

**Fire Safety Officer** is responsible for:

- i) Drafting the Fire Safety Policy for approval by the University.
- ii) Advising on University's Fire Safety strategies.
- iii) Providing advice on fire safety matters and compliance with fire safety standards and legislation.

**Biological Safety Officer** is responsible for:

- i) Drafting the Policy for the control of biological agents, pathogens, and the use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).
- ii) Advising upon all work involving the use of hazardous biological agents or GMOs and must be consulted when such work is planned.
- iii) Advising and assisting members of the University on matters relating to Biological Safety.
- iv) Approving new projects and registering them with relevant external bodies.

- v) Overseeing compliance with relevant legislation governing work with biological agents and GMOs within their appointed areas.

## **Appendix 2 Offer of Health and Safety Services to the Students' Union**

### **Services offered to the Students' Union**

The following services will be offered and provided by the University of Sussex Health and Safety Team, to the Students' Union on campus:

- Provision of advice on event safety from health and safety professionals via a duty officer service (inbox) between the hours of 9:00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.
- Access to the University's Health & Safety training programme (detailed below).
- Access to health and safety resources, templates and supporting documentation via Sussex Direct.

### **Health and Safety Training Programme**

The full training and development programme can be viewed via Sussex Direct. Students' Union staff will be able to access courses on the University health and safety training program free of charge except for the IOSH Managing Safely and IOSH Working Safely Course which are funded by individual departments/ schools and not from a central training budget. As not all Students' Union staff have access to Sussex Direct, the Students' Union will ensure staff are informed of what courses are available to its staff and course booking will be coordinated by a single point of contact nominated by the Students' Union.

Access to Health and Safety training is on a 'first come first served' basis, however where courses are oversubscribed, the Health and Safety Team reserve the right to prioritise attendance on courses based on need (e.g. where there are demonstratable gaps in trained staff) and risk. The needs of the Students' Union to access the training will be considered equally to the needs of the University staff.

The Health and Safety Team follow the University's Organisational Development (OD) Service arrangements by charging a late cancellation / non-attendance fee – details are outlined on the [Health and Safety Training](#) page. Students' Union staff will be charged in the same way as University staff for late cancellation and non-attendance.

Where additional training needs beyond the health and safety training program are identified (e.g. additional first aid courses or bespoke training), the Health and Safety Team will try to accommodate requests through negotiation. Such courses would incur a 'cost recovery' fee to cover course administration and development/ delivery costs where appropriate.

### **Out of Scope - Responsibilities of the Students' Union**

As a separate legal entity, the activities listed below are the responsibility of the Students' Union and do not fall under the scope of the services offered by the University of Sussex:

- Develop and maintain an auditable safety management system in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and undertake assurance activities to ensure legal compliance, appropriate management of H&S and best practice (e.g. inspections, audits etc.)
- Appoint a 'competent person' providing 'Health and Safety assistance' in accordance with Regulation 7 of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Develop and maintain health and safety Policy (with supportive documents) which includes detailed responsibilities and arrangements.
- Have a mechanism in place to monitor changes to health & safety legislation and best practice and to interpret, deliver and communicate these changes to staff.
- Maintain an incident reporting procedure, review and investigate as necessary all health and safety incidents and where required complete Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) notification to the Health & Safety Executive.

### **Costs and Additional Services**

The use of the services outlined are offered free of charge to the Students' Union with the exceptions outlined in the training section above.

### **Appendix 3 Definitions**

**Environment Agency** - The regulatory body responsibly for the protection and enhancement of the environment.

**Health & Safety** - The laws, rules, and principles that are intended to keep people safe from injury disease at work and in public places.

**Health & Safety Executive** - The regulatory body overseeing compliance with Health & Safety regulations.

**Health Surveillance** - A system of ongoing health checks required by law for employees who are exposed to specific hazards at defined levels including noise, vibration, ionising radiation, solvents, fumes, dusts, biological agents or other substances hazardous to health.

**Occupational Health** - The Branch of Medicine dealing with prevention and treatment of work-related injuries or illnesses.

**Risk Assessment** - A systematic process of evaluating the potential risk that may be involved in a specific activity or practice. In this context relating to the health risk as opposed to any risk to the project or completion of the work.

**Wellbeing** - In this context wellbeing relates to all aspects of working life, including the safety of the environment, how workers feel about their work and the climate work is carried out in.



**Appendix 4 Organograms**

Figure 1 Meetings

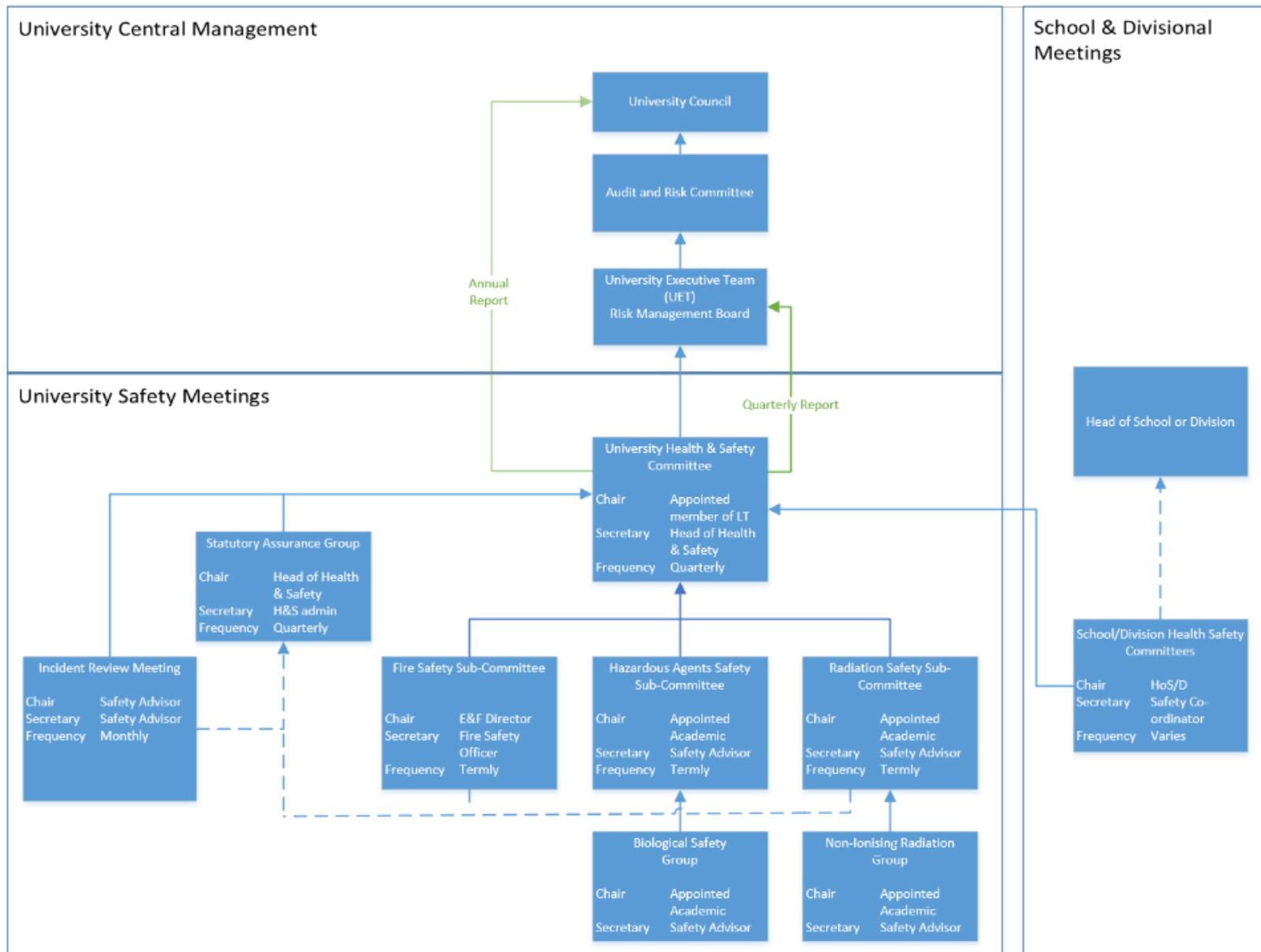
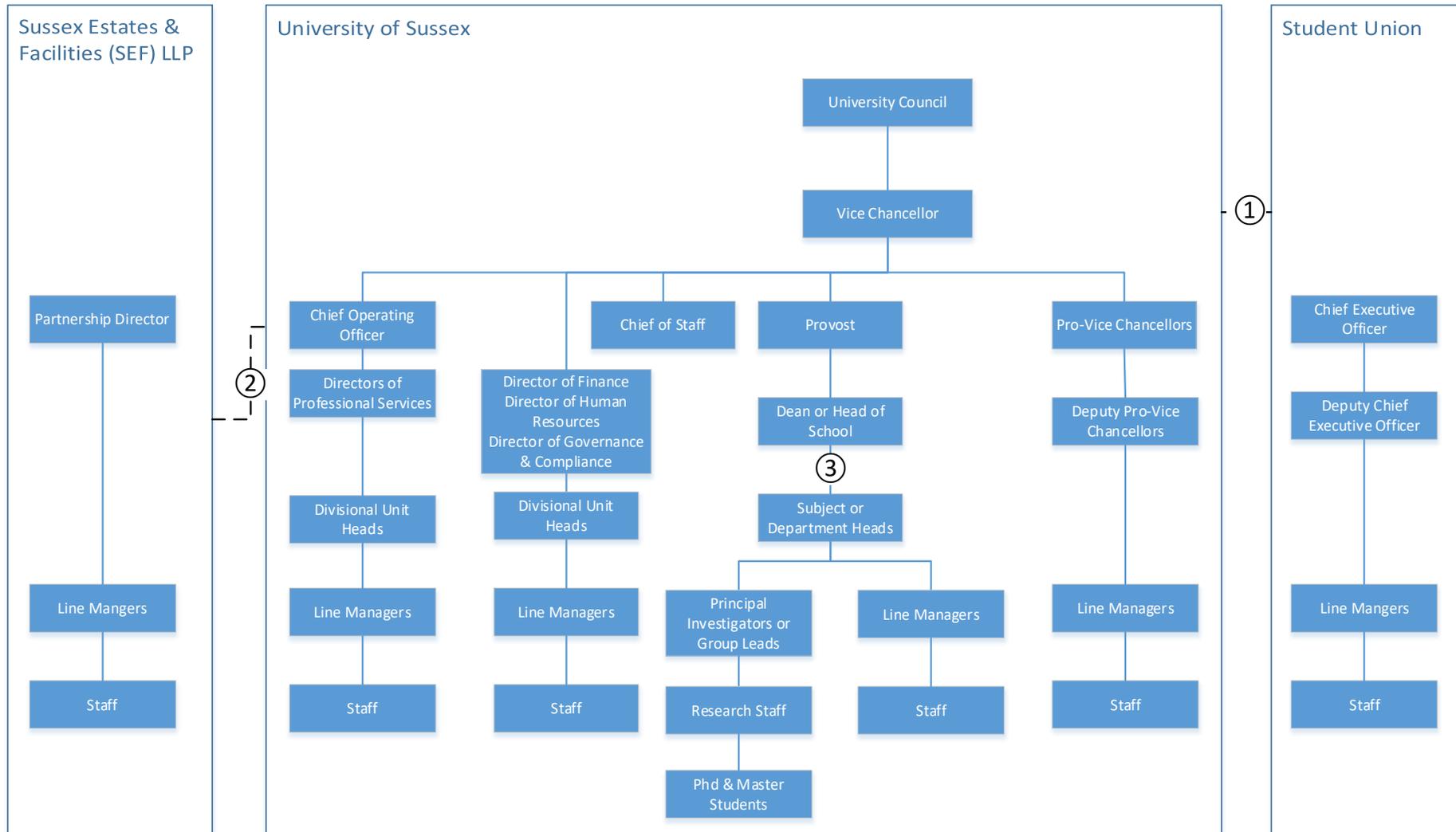


Figure 2 Line Management Organogram



Footnotes on Figure 2

- 1 The relationship between the Student Union and the University of Sussex is managed at the University union Relations Committee.
- 2 The University of Sussex is a majority shareholder of the Sussex Estates and Facilities (SEF) LLP. Oversight of SEF is managed via the SEF board with day-to-day oversight of estates related functions delegated to the Director of Estates, Facilities and Commercial services.
- 3 School organisational charts can be found in School Health & Safety Policies. The establishment of a faculty structure will change the line management organogram for academic lines from 1 August 2024