



Safety Strategy

September 2025

Introduction

Our **Safety Strategy** defines the School of Chemistry's approach to health & safety and underpins the operational management and delivery of H&S activities to maintain our safety culture, commitment to high standards of safety & wellbeing and our compliance with legal requirements, as indicated in Figure 1.

Fundamentally, effective and proportionate risk management ensures the School meets its regulatory compliance requirements to maintain the safety of all members of the School and visitors; proactively identifying and mitigating the significant hazards across the School's teaching, research, and associated activities is achieved through use of the School's safety systems in conjunction with innate safety sense and hazard awareness informed through training and knowledge-sharing.

Vision & Purpose

The School of Chemistry builds on a tradition of distinguished scholarship, as a place where critical thinking, discovery, innovation and leadership flourish. Our vision is for our students and staff to harness their curiosity with outstanding and diverse talents to pursue knowledge that can be used to tackle global challenges and improve people's lives. We do this with safety, sustainability, collaboration and inclusion at the heart of all our school activities.

We aim to ensure that all of the School's activities take place in a safe environment that facilitates productivity and compliance with both regulatory requirements and best practices for reducing and managing the risks associated with the discipline of chemistry, organised as shown in Figures 2 and 3.

The goal of our Safety Strategy is...

"To ensure the consistency, understanding and adoption of safety approaches, equipping our undergraduates, postgraduates and staff to maintain a high standard of safety awareness and skills, and thereby reduce accidents, incidents and near-misses in particular those that have a lack of awareness, understanding, or inconsistent approaches as a root cause."

We work to achieve this goal through...

- **proactive communication** (e.g. induction, online & practical training, safety updates)
- **effective use of safety systems** (e.g. CoSHH, chemicals management, lab safety audits)



- **access to safety information and advice** (e.g. School Safety Handbook, SOPs, hazard-specific guidance);
- **continuous improvement** and a **responsive approach** to managing and reducing risks in chemistry research & teaching.

Leadership & Oversight

Our safety culture is maintained through a combination of leadership and engagement across the School. Overall responsibility for the health and safety of staff, students and visitors to the School of Chemistry resides with the Head of School, with operational management of the School's health and safety systems and delivery of the H&S Annual Plan delegated to the H&S Manager.

Supervisors, Lab Responsibles and/or Line Managers have the responsibility for ensuring the implementation of health and safety practices in their Groups, labs and workplaces and ensuring effective sustained adoption.

H&S management reporting by the H&S Manager is direct to the Head of School, with reviews and performance overseen by the School's Safety Committee and Senior Management (CPRC).

Engagement & Competence

Proactive engagement with our H&S systems and activities is needed at the individual, Lab, Group and whole-School level to achieve the aforementioned vision and maintain the high standards of our safety culture.

All members of the School need to be able to recognise foreseeable risks and have the competence and means to reduce them to as low as reasonably practicable, by utilising appropriate risk management measures, approaches and relevant standard procedures used consistently across the School. We facilitate this through: induction; training; providing information resources, SOPs and risk assessment templates; technical advice and specialist services; and committee reporting. The School's Safety Handbook & Policy is kept up to date to reflect best practice and ensure guidance and associated training remains effective, understood and accessible to all members of the School. Descriptions of the aforementioned activities and systems, illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, are provided in Table 1.

For all enquiries about the School of Chemistry's Safety Strategy, please contact:

Dr Steve Hankin

H&S Manager, School of Chemistry, University of Edinburgh

Steve.Hankin@ed.ac.uk

Our H&S systems & activities

Principal Regulations

	Induction	Information	Training	Safe workplace & practices	Risk Assessment	LEV testing	First Aid	Fire detection, drills & testing	Safety Committee & Specialist Safety Advisors	Safety Audits	Wellbeing
Management of Health & Safety At Work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Dangerous Substances & Explosive Atmospheres (DSEAR)		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Ionising Radiation (IRR)		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			
Artificial Optical Radiation at Work (AOR)		✓	✓		✓						
Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment)		✓		✓							
Health & Safety (First Aid)		✓		✓			✓				
Manual Handling		✓	✓	✓	✓						
Personal Protective Equipment at Work		✓	✓	✓	✓						
Pressure Systems Safety		✓		✓							
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR)							✓				
Safety Representatives & Safety Committees								✓			
Fire Safety		✓		✓			✓				
Workplace Health, Safety & Welfare				✓							✓

Figure 1: Summary of the principal regulatory drivers for the School's approach to H&S

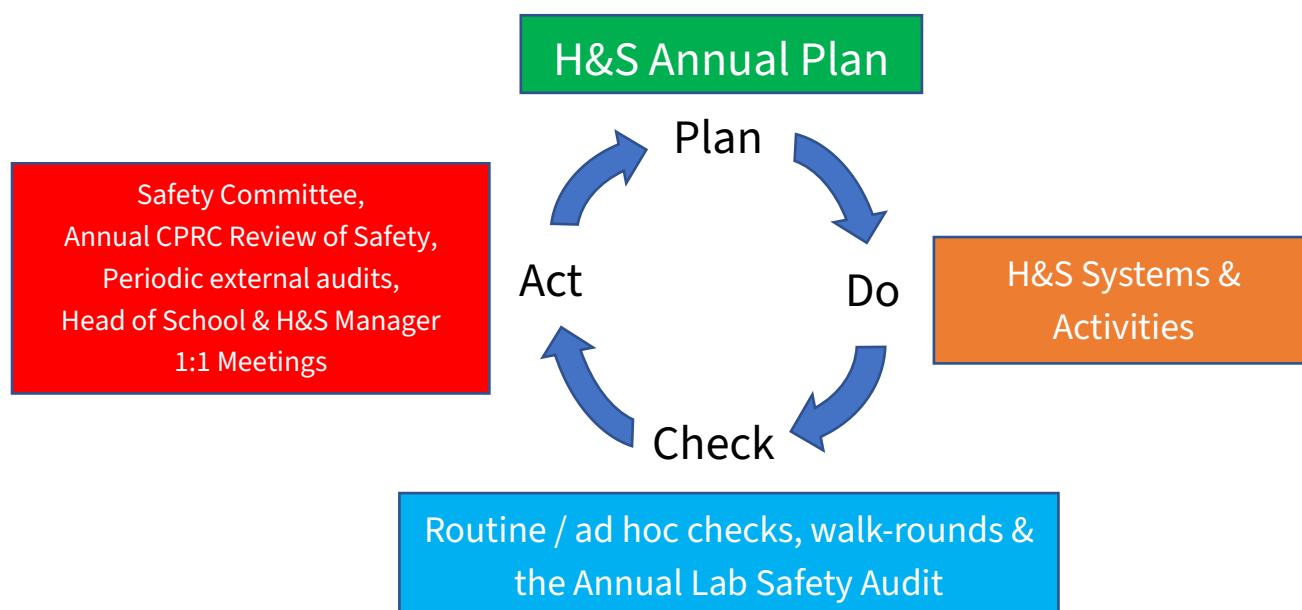


Figure 2: Overview of the H&S approach in the School of Chemistry, shown in the context of the HSE's Plan-Do-Check-Act approach recommended in HSG 65 "Managing for Health & Safety"

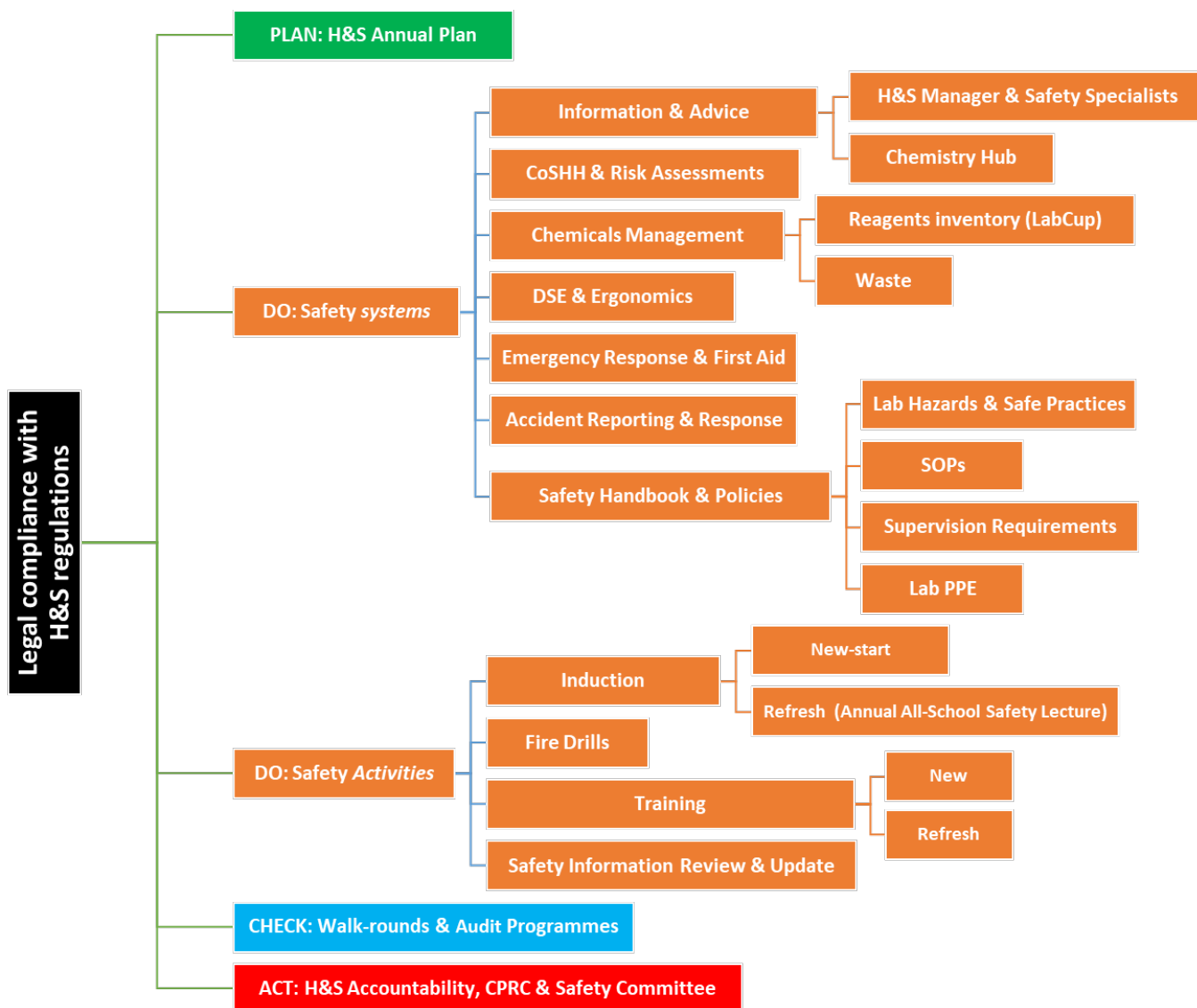


Figure 3: Elements of the H&S approach in the School of Chemistry

Table 1: Description of the elements of the H&S approach in the School of Chemistry

	<i>Element</i>	<i>Description</i>
Plan	H&S Annual Plan	The School's Health & Safety Annual Plan outlines the organisational-level activities and systems in place to protect members of the School from potential harm, and maintained to ensure their continuing effectiveness. The Plan identifies who is responsible for each element and target completion timepoints during the year, as appropriate.
Do – safety systems	Information & advice	<p>The principal online source for the School's safety information is the safety section of the School's intranet - Chemistry Hub – providing access to the School Safety Handbook & Policy, CoSHH Portals, forms & templates, guidance, regulatory licences and registers of First Aiders & Fire Stewards.</p> <p>To address any matters concerning workplace health & safety and risks associated with chemicals, radiation, lasers or biological agents, advice is provided locally by the H&S Manager and the School's Safety Specialists (Radiation Protection Supervisor, Departmental Laser Supervisor and Biological Safety Advisor), with support available from the University H&S Department as needed.</p>
	Safety Handbook & Policy	The School Safety Handbook & Policy comprises four sections, providing information on i) general provisions for safety in the School's buildings, ii) laboratory hazards & safe practices including supervision requirements, lab PPE and waste disposal, iii) specific actions in the event of an emergency, and iv) links to additional university Codes of Practice.
	CoSHH & Risk Assessment	<p>All experiments involving hazardous chemical substances are subject to CoSHH assessment, which is facilitated in the School through a standardised template, guidance, and online submission, approval and storage system (accessed through Chemistry Hub).</p> <p>Risks associated with experiments or activities excluding hazardous chemicals (i.e. physical processes, fieldwork, biological agents, radiation and lasers) are subject to assessment using the appropriate template.</p>
	Chemicals management	<p>Safe management and sustainable use of chemicals across the School is facilitated through group-specific inventories of chemicals using LabCup™ software. The system provides smart-phone and PC access to the location, ownership, quantity and MSDSs for logged reagents and consumables. System entries are made by Chemistry Stores on receipt of newly-purchased chemicals, with inventories maintained and audited by the owning Group.</p> <p>The consignment and disposal of segregated chemical and solvent waste from research and teaching labs is managed through Chemistry Stores. Advice is on-hand from the H&S Manager and Chemistry Stores for the disposal of high-hazard waste, such as legacy chemicals or potentially explosive material.</p>
	Ergonomics	A system of two-stage workplace ergonomics assessments (online via Cardinus with an in-person follow-up as required) is available for all staff and research



		students in the School to identify and help resolve any workstation or laboratory ergonomics issues.
	Emergency response & First Aid	<p>The School has a volunteer Emergency Team trained and equipped to help respond to incidents beyond the capability of lab users alone which don't require a building evacuation and/or a 999 call to the emergency services.</p> <p>In the event of an incident requiring a building evacuation, triggered automatically or manually using the fire alarm system, the School's Fire Team (including 42 volunteer Fire Stewards) help facilitate the safe and complete evacuation of the building(s) and support the emergency response as needed.</p> <p>The School's team of certified First Aiders work on a mutual assistance basis across Joseph Black Bldg, Christina Miller Bldg and Nucleus Lab, to provide first aid and any specialist response (e.g. for incidents requiring Lifeline O₂) as needed.</p>
	Accident Reporting & Response	Accident, incidents and near-misses are notified locally, to enable any immediate First Aid response and action to mitigate further harm, and reported subsequently to the university's accident reporting system. Summary details and statistics are reported monthly to the School's Senior Management (CPRC) and to the Safety Committee, with School-wide awareness-raising and/or harm-reduction measures taken accordingly.
Do – safety activities	Safety Induction	<p>Newstart Safety Inductions, providing comprehensive information on the School's safety systems and practical arrangements take place i) monthly, for any new staff and PGRs joining the School mid-year, ii) annually, as part of the PGR and PGT Inductions for the new student cohorts. Attendance is recorded and return of a completed H&S Training Record Form is used to record the initial mandatory and optional training undertaken.</p> <p>Refresher Safety Inductions take place annually for all staff & continuing PGRs in the School (with a recording made available for those unable to attend in person).</p>
	Training	<p>Online, self-study and in-person safety training is available across the School, as initial and refresher training as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All lab-based new members of the School (UG, PGT, PGR, staff) are enrolled on the mandatory online Chemistry Safety LEARN course; UG students are required to complete an annual refresh of the course's Knowledge Check.• Practical Teaching Lab Skills, handling gas cylinders & regulators, and cryogens safety training is now delivered as part of the annual PGR Induction programme and on demand.• In-person training is provided for CoSHH assessment, lab First Aid and chemical spill response, LabCup™, lab safety auditing, and laser alignment safety.• Additional online training for PGRs and staff, provided by the university, is accessible through P&M.
	Info & systems review, update &	Safety information and systems are updated responsively and reviewed annually. Mid-year revisions of the School Safety Handbook are summarised on



	continuous improvement	Chemistry Hub and new guidance, systems or approaches as continuous improvement are subject to consultation, as appropriate, through the School's Safety Committee and Senior Management (CPRC).
	Fire drills	Weekly testing of the fire alarm is complemented by two annual fire drills, involving a full evacuation of either the Joseph Black or Christina Miller Building in turn. The annual fire drill and evacuation for the Teaching Lab in the Nucleus Bldg is managed separately by the KB Campus Manager, with an observer from the School.
Check	Walk-rounds & Annual Lab Safety Audits	<p>Maintaining the School's safety culture, and identifying any necessary actions, is facilitated by checks made through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Peer-based observations (i.e. within a Group or lab) and local improvement action, with any necessary escalation to the H&S Manager (e.g. for action or wider awareness and adoption across the School).2. Independent ad hoc observations made and followed-up by the H&S Manager with the individual / Group / lab concerned, again with any action or wider awareness-raising and adoption across the School, as necessary.3. Formal observations and recommendations documented as part of the School's Annual Lab Safety Audit programme carried out by members of the School Safety Committee, for action by the Lab Responsible / PI and lab users.
Act	H&S Accountability, CPRC reporting & Safety Committee	<p>Whilst overall responsibility for the health and safety of staff, students and visitors to the School resides with the Head of School, and operational management of the School's health and safety systems and delivery of the H&S Annual Plan is delegated to the H&S Manager, it is line managers and Supervisors who have the responsibility for ensuring the sustained adoption of health and safety practices in their Groups.</p> <p>H&S accountability and any necessary management support for action is facilitated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fortnightly 1:1 meetings and ad hoc meetings as needed between the H&S Manager and Head of School.• Monthly reporting to the Senior Management (CPRC) Meeting, providing a summary of accidents & incidents and highlighting matters for Senior Management awareness.• Quarterly meetings of the School Safety Committee, to discuss and act as necessary on matters including: the occurrence of accidents & incidents; any issues raised by representatives from the School's academic Sections, Professional Services staff, PGRs, Post-docs & Specialist Safety Advisors; any developments in the School's H&S approaches.• An annual review of H&S matters presented in-person to the Senior Management (CPRC) at a designated meeting.• Periodic external audits of the School's H&S management systems.