



Safety Note 26

The role of Health and Safety Representatives

Scope/Background/Introduction

The University has safety representatives (appointed by recognised unions) and representatives of employee safety (elected by the workforce). Their function is similar and below is a brief summary of both roles (adapted from HSE guidance).

Functions of Health and Safety Representatives

The table below summarises the function of health and safety representatives at the University of Reading.

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulation 1977	Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
Appointed in writing by the University College Union (currently the only recognised trade union at the university)	Elected by the workforce (this is for grade 5 and below staff, who currently have no unions recognised)
Title: Safety Representative	Title: Representative of employee safety
Functions	
Investigate potential hazards and dangerous occurrences at the workplace, complaints by an employee relating to health, safety and welfare at work and examine causes of workplace accidents	
Provide representation to the employer on the above investigations and on general matters affecting the health and safety of the employees they represent (UCU as part of the local agreement represent all staff grade 6 and above).	Representation to the employer on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential hazards and dangerous occurrences - General matters affecting the health and safety of the employees they represent - Specific matters on which the employer must consult
Inspect the workplace	
Represent employees in dealings with health and safety inspectors	Represent employees in dealings with health and safety inspectors
Receive certain information from inspectors	
Attend health and safety committee meetings	Attend University Health and Safety Committee meetings

Representation will generally be taken to include consultation with the University on general matters that may affect the health and safety of the employees that they represent, including: risks arising from work activities; new systems of work; new technology; emergency procedures; H&S training etc. Consultation may be through the University Health and Safety Committee, or through the exchange of information and dialogue with relevant managers.

Staff fulfilling these roles will be allowed paid time in order to carry out their functions and to attend any necessary training. Safety representatives have access to suitable training through their union. Representatives for employee safety will be provided with training by the University, organised through Health & Safety Services.

Health and Safety Services
August 2014