Royal Holloway University of London
Department of Media Arts
Departmental Health & Safety Policy

1. Policy Statement

1.1 The Department of Media Arts acknowledges its responsibilities in implementing the College Health & Safety policies and procedures at departmental level to ensure the provision of a safe working environment for staff, students, visitors and anyone involved in or affected by its work activity both on and off-campus.

1.2 The Department also acknowledges its role in preparing its students for working in media practice and is committed to incorporating the essential principles of health & safety management, particularly in the context of media production, as an integral part of students' experience throughout its practice programmes.

1.3 Furthermore, the department recognizes the key themes of health and safety management in the entertainment and leisure industries, as described by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), and their importance in setting out an operating framework for health & safety management in Media Arts practice work.

2. Formal arrangements for meeting College Health & Safety standards

2.1 The Head of Department is responsible to the Dean of Arts for:

(i) Ensuring that departmental activities are conducted in accordance with College, legislative, and other formal standards and that those hazards having the potential to cause harm are risk assessed and identified controls implemented;

(ii) Producing safe systems of work and the methodology for complying with this Policy, individual policies and procedures and associated formal documents within their area of responsibility;

(iii) Organising supervision to control the working environment and the maintenance of safe standards;

(iv) Investigating accidents to establish causes and prevent recurrence, if necessary, with the advice and assistance of Health and Safety Office staff;

(v) The health and safety induction of new staff and students and ensuring that information, instruction and training is provided to meet individually identified needs, if necessary with the advice and assistance of a member of the Health and Safety Office;

(vi) Identifying, allocating and monitoring the adequacy of the specific health and safety responsibilities of staff and students, including departmental Health and Safety Co-ordinators while ensuring their roles and responsibilities are met;

(vii) Producing departmental code(s) of safe working practice and implementing them on a day-to-day basis, where identified necessary, normally by risk assessment.

(viii) Reviewing the above arrangements at regular intervals, making such adjustments as may be identified necessary.

2.2 The Head of Production Facility acts as the Departmental Health & Safety Coordinator and assists the Head of Department in the execution of the above duties.

2.3 In addition to acting as the Departmental Health and Safety Coordinator, the Head of Production Facility is also responsible to the Head of Department for the line management of the practice support staff in the Media Arts Centre, including the operation of a safe working environment and practices. S/He also coordinates the support staff's role in practice skills training, including any detailed health and safety training associated with media practice.

2.4 Members of the Media Arts Centre practice support staff are responsible to the Head of Production Facility for the operational supervision of specific areas as follows:

- Studio Manager – Television Studio and AV installations
- Digital Media Technician – Post production facilities
- Facilities Technician – Location recording equipment
- Art & Design Technician – Art Department/Production Design areas

2.5 The Departmental Administrator is responsible to the Head of Department for the line management of the department's administrative staff in the Department Office and administrative area, including the operation of a safe working environment and practices.

2.6 All members of Media Arts practice teaching staff are responsible for ensuring the planning of any media practice activity is properly risk assessed in order to anticipate potential hazards and ensure appropriate control measures are adopted during supervised classes, or incorporated into any location recording plan.

2.7 For student productions, particularly any involving location recording, one person will always be designated as being responsible for undertaking the necessary risk assessments, seeking advice from appropriate parties including external location providers and seeking approval from their course tutor. The designated person is also responsible for ensuring the hazards and control measures are communicated to anyone involved in the recording and the control measures specified in the Location Safety Form are put into action during the period coinciding with the associated equipment loan agreement.

2.8 The Department is committed to encouraging staff to undertake training so they can take on acting responsibilities such as fire marshal, first aider, workstation assessor, COSSH assessor, manual handling assessor, etc.

2.9 Any matters to do with the physical environment must be referred to Facilities Management via the Departmental Administrator for the Arts Building or the Head of Production Facility for the Media Arts Centre.

3. General responsibilities of Media Arts students and staff

3.1 In accordance with the College Health & Safety Policy:

Individual Members of Staff and Students will co-operate and comply at all times with the health and safety information, instruction and training provided and bring without delay to the attention of their line manager/department office, any hazards identified, or improvements identified necessary. They do, therefore, have a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, and of other persons whom their actions or omissions may affect.

All persons must co-operate with the College to enable it, or any other person, to comply with any duty or requirement imposed by health and safety legislation. Specifically, no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions (Section 8 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974).

4. The Management of Risk at Departmental level

4.1 All work activities undertaken in the Department will be risk assessed by appropriately trained staff in accordance with the College guidance on General Risk Assessment.

4.2 Where appropriate, a more detailed risk assessment will need to be undertaken by appropriately trained staff, which will normally include such activities as manual handling, work at height and use of substances that fall within COSHH regulation.

4.3 Many media practice activities, in particular film and sound recording on location, are not possible to risk assess generically owing to the extreme variability of risk involved in each case, depending on the nature of the activity, the people involved or affected, and the operating environment. The Department will therefore operate a policy of risk assessing every location recording using the Media Arts Location Safety Form.

4.4 Students who are expected to do location recording work will be trained in essential location assessment techniques, including safety risk assessment, as an integral part of their taught programme. For every planned 'shoot', which may in the case of documentary comprise a succession of different locations during the filming period, the student will complete the relevant type of Location Safety Form and submit it to their immediate practice course tutor for approval by email. If the course tutor approves the form, s/he will forward it to the designated Location Services email address (currently locationsafety.media-arts@rhul.ac.uk) confirming approval and only then will the student be allowed to book location recording equipment. The Departmental Health & Safety Coordinator is available to offer specialist advice to either the student or staff member during this process, in consultation with the College Health & Safety advisers when required.

4.5 The Location Safety Form process will also be used for television studio productions and contemporary art installations, other than actual taught sessions led by a member of practice teaching staff.

4.6 Although it is not a course requirement, the Department operates a filming abroad policy for advanced students who, for programme content reasons, wish to film outside of the UK.

4.7 Risks identified and assessed in accordance with the arrangements set out above will be managed in accordance with the performance standards and work methods defined in the set of Media Arts work method statements, published on the Media Arts Centre website. This is primarily aimed at departmental staff but includes the management of certain media practice activities that will be undertaken by students.

5. Health & Safety Information

5.1 All new members of staff will as part of their first day induction meet with the Departmental Health and Safety Coordinator, who will use the College Staff Induction Checklist to ensure they receive the required health and safety induction and identify any immediate further health & safety training needs and the likely requirement for workstation assessment.

5.2 All new and returning students will receive a short initial induction talk during September induction week, drawing attention to the relevant health & safety information contained the Student Handbook.

5.3 Students will receive more detailed and timely induction when they begin to use a new practice space, for example, during their first media lab or television studio class.

5.4 Students will be given training in the safe handling of production equipment as an integral part of their taught programme.

5.5 The Department will also use appropriate media, including handouts, website, email and notice boards, to convey health & safety information to its students and staff in a relevant and timely manner.

5.6 The Head of Production Facility will maintain for the department a record of all health & safety training delivered to students during their practice skills training.

5.7 Individual members of practice teaching staff and practice support staff are responsible for recording attendance at any classes that include health & safety training using the department's standard attendance form and forwarding completed returns to the Head of Production Facility.

5.8 The Departmental Health & Safety Coordinator will maintain for the department a record of staff attendance at any health & safety training courses, including completed induction checklists.

6. Monitoring performance

6.1 The Head of Department will monitor feedback from students and staff about health & safety issues by means of Student Staff Committee, course evaluations, personal complaints or expressions of concern, and other appropriate formal and informal systems, taking appropriate and timely action in consultation with relevant colleagues.

6.2 The Departmental Health & Safety Coordinator will produce a brief summary report on health & safety matters for each Department Board meeting. The report will include an anonymized summary of any accidents or incidents reported in accordance with College RIDDOR procedures since the previous Department Board, including a record of action taken to prevent recurrence.

Dr. James Bennett
Head of Department
27th May 2015