ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

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HEALTH AND SAFETY Accident/ Incident Reporting and Investigation

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Contents

1.0	**Purpose**	Page	**2**
2.0	**Scope and Commencement**		**2**
3.0	**Background**		**2**
4.0	**Definitions**		**2-3**
5.0	**Key Legal Requirements**		**3**
6.0	**Responsibilities**		**3-5**
7.0	**Accident Incident Investigation Procedure**		**5-6**
8.0	**RIDDOR**		**7**
9.0	**Corrective and Preventative Actions**		**7-8**
10.0	**Resources**		**8**

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all accidents/incidents and near misses are reported through the correct departments and are fully investigated to establish the facts of the events, enabling the identification and implementation of suitable and appropriate control measures to prevent future re-occurrences.

2 SCOPE & COMMENCEMENT

2.1 This procedure applies to all areas within the University with effect from April 2025. It applies to the University's Staff, Agency Workers, Students, Visitors and Contractors.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 There are legal, moral, and financial reasons to report and investigate all accidents/incidents and near misses.

3.2 Reporting and investigating accidents/incidents and near misses are a requirement to ensure the effective management of health and safety risks. These incidents may imply that the control measures from the current risk assessment were inadequate.

3.3 Identifying immediate, contributory and root causes will help to implement suitable corrective action(s) to prevent re-occurrences or future injuries that could be more severe. Even if no injury was sustained (near miss), this is an opportunity to improve safety and prevent an injury in the future.

3.4 Incidents that are ignored and not thoroughly investigated may lead to more significant incident or injuries at a later stage.

4 DEFINITIONS

Accident	An event that resulted in injury or ill health (HSG245)
Incident (Includes near misses, dangerous occurrences, property damage, fire etc)	An event that, while not causing harm, had the potential to cause injury or ill health. (HSG245).

Lost Time Injury (LTI)	An injury sustained which prevents an employee from conducting their work duties following the work-related injury.
Immediate Causes	The most obvious reason why the incident occurred (e.g. no guard on machine, wet floor). There could be one or more obvious reasons.
Contributory (or underlying) Causes	Unsafe acts or unsafe conditions – the less obvious reasons, normally an organisational or system failing (e.g. prestart checks not completed).
Root Causes	These are usually due to management, planning or organisational failings (e.g. lack of training, no risk assessment, inadequate control measures)

5 KEY LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 The Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 (HSAWO) requires employers to fulfil their duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety, and welfare of their employees and those not in their employment (e.g. contractors/visitors/students/agency workers) that may be affected through workplace risks.

5.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work (NI) Regulations 2000 (MHSAWR) requires employers to plan, organise, control, monitor and review their health and safety management systems. Accident & Incident investigations will demonstrate compliance as part of the Plan, Do, Check and Act model (PDCA).

5.3 The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (NI) 1997 (RIDDOR) requires employers to report and keep records of certain work-related injuries, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive for NI within a required timeframe.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Please refer to the main Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy on the University's website for further details on roles and levels of responsibility using the link below.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy (ulster.ac.uk)

Relevant Persons
(Heads of School/Departmental Managers)

6.2 **Must ensure that:**

- Employees, agency workers, students, and service users are made aware of their duty to report accidents/incidents and near misses involving work/study activities whether on or off campus grounds (e.g. on placement/field trips).
- All reported incidents that involve staff, agency workers, students, or service users or incidents that fall within their departmental area must be fully investigated as laid out in this procedure.
- Initiate the accident or incident investigation immediately (or as soon as possible).
- Recommended corrective actions on the report are reviewed, with relevant actions implemented and closed out in a timely manner.
- Investigation reports capture all the relevant detail and are fully completed.
- Completed investigation reports are forwarded to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team within an appropriate timescale. (Refer to section 7.1 and 7.4).

Staff and Agency Workers

6.4 **Must ensure that:**

- Accidents/incidents and near misses are promptly reported to their line manager or, for agency workers, the relevant University manager/supervisor – this should be immediate or as soon as possible.
- They fully assist, co-operate, and provide truthful information/evidence in the accident/incident investigation process and completion of relevant reports.

HSW Team

6.5 **The HSW team will:**

- Provide training on accident/ incident and near miss reporting and investigation.
- Review final investigation reports to establish if appropriate detail, root cause analysis and corrective/preventative action programmes have been applied.
- Assist with investigating serious accidents/incidents or near misses.

- Report to the Health and Safety Executive (NI) and Local Authorities as required by statutory duty (See Section 8).
- Report to the Senior Leadership Team as required by University policy.
- Retain accident/incident investigation documents in line with University retention policies and procedures.
- Provide updates on accidents/incidents and near misses during statutory HSW faculty/departmental committee meetings and encourage best practice sharing where applicable.
- Notify Trade Union H&S Representatives of serious and significant accidents, incidents and near misses.

7 ACCIDENT/ INCIDENT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

7.1 In the event of a serious incident, the relevant person (line manager, Head of School, Project Manager) should:

- Take charge of the incident scene.
- Ensure the welfare of the injured person, where applicable. (Refer to First Aid Procedure.)
- If possible, make the area/equipment safe.
- Secure the incident scene i.e erect barrier(s), signs to prevent a re-occurring injury and enable evidence to remain intact.
- Begin to capture and record all the relevant information from the injured person, if possible, and other witnesses to the incident.
- Gather specific information on equipment, plant, machinery or materials involved (include model/specification numbers) or measurements such as distances/weights, where relevant.
- Obtain pictures of the incident scene.
- Notify the safety team by the quickest possible means by telephoning 028 70123456 (from mobiles) or 22222 (from internal phones) for serious/fatal injuries, and email details to: healthandsafety@ulster.ac.uk.

- It is important that all information is gathered immediately after the incident or as promptly as possible to ensure the accuracy of information.

- The incident scene should remain secured until all relevant evidence has been gathered and is safe to occupy.

- In the case of serious incidents/injuries, the Police and/or Health and Safety Executive (NI) may attend and take control of the scene. The HSW Team will liaise with investigators as appropriate.

7.2 Section 7.1 may be relevant and should be applied to significant near misses and dangerous occurrences.

7.3 All accidents, incidents and near misses on University premises or relating to work or studies (placement, fieldwork etc) must be reported using the Accident, Incident and Near Miss Reporting Form linked below:

Health and Safety Forms - Ulster University

7.4 The reporting form for accidents/incidents, including over 3 day injuries and not listed under section 7.1 should be returned to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team promptly (and within 5 working days) for further review by emailing healthandsafety@ulster.ac.uk. Forms with incomplete or missing information including signatures will be returned to the relevant person for additional details.
N.B For near miss reporting, section 3 of the reporting form will not be applicable.

7.5 All accidents, incidents and near misses should be fully investigated and the relevant detail highlighted in section 7.1 obtained. The level of investigation required will be dependent on the nature of the risk and/or the severity of the injury sustained.

Injuries involving contractors

7.6 Any accidents, incidents or near misses involving contractors on campus should be reported and fully investigated in line with this procedure and the University's contractor management procedure.

Injuries involving unaccompanied visitors

7.7 Where any accidents, incidents or near misses involving unaccompanied visitors on the campus are reported to security, the reporting form should be completed and returned to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team.

Sports Injuries

7.8 Injuries sustained as a direct result of sporting activities should be documented and recorded on the Sports Injuries Reporting Form: Health and Safety Forms - Ulster University

8 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR)

8.1 There is a legal requirement under the RIDDOR Regulations to report certain injuries, ill health and dangerous occurrences as laid out in the below HSENI guidance booklet:

RIDDOR booklet (hseni.gov.uk)

8.2 The HSW team will undertake the reporting requirements under the Regulation on behalf of the University. The relevant person undertaking the initial investigation should ensure incidents are reported in a timely manner to enable the HSW team to fulfil this legal duty within the timescales required. (See sections 7.1 & 7.4).

9 CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

9.1 The relevant person (that is the Head of School/Departmental Manager) must review all accident, incident reports with the injured person and their immediate supervisor to ensure all facts of the incident have been correctly captured, all documents are completed and to determine the immediate, contributory and root causes of the incident.

9.2 During the investigation, consider the conditions below, where applicable, to help further identify contributory and root causations:

- Work Environment – What were the noise, lighting, heat/cold, flooring, and housekeeping conditions?
- Human/Machine Interface – Was the guarding inadequate? Was the equipment defective? Incorrect tool used? Were there manual handling/ergonomic issues?
- Risk Assessment/Procedural Controls – Was the risk assessment suitable and sufficient? Was there a safe procedure? Were all staff trained?
- Management Controls – Was the unsafe action/condition known to management?
- Communication – Was there a potential lack of communication/ misunderstanding of the task/activity?
- Training, information, instruction and supervision – Was there a lack of training and information? Was there any misunderstanding? Did the correct person undertake the activity? Was there a requirement for higher levels of supervision?

- Individual influence – Were procedures followed? Was a short-cut taken? Was there a misjudgement on actions?

9.3 It is the responsibility of the departmental manager/head of school to identify suitable control measures to prevent a re-occurring injury, where required, and ensure all actions are implemented within a timely manner.

10 RESOURCES

Report accidents and illness - Health and safety made simple (hse.gov.uk)

RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 - HSE

Managing for health and safety (hse.gov.uk)

Investigating accidents and incidents: A workbook for employers, unions, safety representatives and safety professionals HSG245 (hse.gov.uk)

RIDDOR (NI) 97 booklet | Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (hseni.gov.uk)