



Code	QA121
Title	Contractor Safety in Laboratories and Other Units Rooms
Policy Owner	Health & Safety Officer
Date	12 November 2020 (Technical Rev. 2020)
Approved By	UMT

1.0 Purpose

To provide a policy on managing access by contractors and others who may not be familiar with the risks in Unit laboratories or other Unit rooms. Contractors and others include external and internal staff that may be carrying out a range of maintenance, servicing work or other projects. These may be contracted by the relevant Unit directly or employees of/contracted by another Unit of the University. This policy is primarily intended to ensure the safety of the contractor employees or others working in unfamiliar rooms with particular risks and secondarily is to ensure the integrity of the research being carried out.

2.0 Legislation

As well as the University's duty to its own employees, *the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, s. 12 sets out that the University as an employer has the duty to manage and conduct its "undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that in the course of the work being carried on individuals at the place of work (not being his or her employees) are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare".

S. 13 of this Act also sets out that employees have duties including "to take reasonable care ...to protect the safety, health or welfare of any other person who may be affected by the employee's acts or omissions".

3.0 Existing Documentation

The existing documents are listed under **6.0 References**. This policy sets out the procedure and how these existing documents are to be used to reduce the risks to contractors and others. This policy does not apply to emergency situations where there is an immediate risk to health, safety, property or the environment. In these circumstances access will be needed immediately with due regard for the safety of all.

Units with Laboratories, Workshop or other risk rooms:

The room's risks must be identified in the **Unit's Room Risk Assessment**. In addition the **Unit Safety Statement Policy** (Part C.17) Units must set out the arrangements the Unit has in place for the safe access and working of University Support Staff, Contract Personnel or others at risk.

Each room with specialist risks is to have a current **Local Operational Control Summary** posted on the door which identifies the responsible Principal Investigators (PIs), Lab. contacts, the risks and what areas are to be cleaned/bins emptied.

4.0 Procedure

Staff, contractors or others must be appropriately trained by their employer/line manager before they can access laboratories or other risk areas. Where necessary the University of Galway Unit should arrange an appropriate safety induction before work commences. This training will be sufficient so that the employees can carry out their work in the laboratory or other Unit area safely e.g. to understand chemical pictograms, the correct Personal Protective Equipment to wear, and who to contact but would not generally be on the detail of the specific laboratory procedures.

For staff/contractors carrying out routine cleaning and other works in laboratories there are established procedures and supervision in place to reduce any risks of them working in unfamiliar areas. This policy further emphasises these important measures.

In the case of a project where Buildings & Estates or another Unit are planning work in a building or specific rooms



that requires access by unfamiliar contractors or others, the relevant University staff need to risk assess the work in advance. This includes method statements to ensure that the risks of the particular work are reduced and controls include supervision, periodic checks, etc. Buildings & Estates have an Operational Control Procedure – Work in Laboratories (being updated). Where the Buildings & Estates Office is organising the work, it must provide at least 5 working days’ notice to the Unit’s Building Liaisons to give sufficient prior notice for the areas to be cleared or otherwise made ready for the works.

Procedures must also address the risks of where there may be more than 1 or more unfamiliar, separate staff or groups as this causes additional risks and requires specific management controls.

5.0 Persons Responsible

Name	Responsibility
UMT	Agree this policy. For noting by Údarás as approved by UMT.
Health & Safety Officer	Develop this policy in consultation with relevant staff.
Head of Unit:	Satisfy themselves that this risk is adequately managed.
Principal Investigators (PIs):	Responsible to manage the safety of their research work. This includes ensuring that risks to all persons are assessed, current (dynamic RAs), the necessary controls are in place and effectively communicated.
Lab. Manager, Technical Staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On behalf of the Head of Unit and PI(s) to operate the necessary safety measures based on the risk assessments and updates provided by the PIs. Provide safety inductions to personnel where needed.
Buildings & Estates:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible to appoint competent contractors, Provide appropriate training to their staff to reduce lab or other risks because they are unfamiliar with these rooms and hazards. Need to ensure that work is planned and risk assessed sufficiently in advance to effectively reduce the risks. Provide sufficient notice of works being carried out – at least 5 working days’ notice.

6.0 References

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

Room Risk Assessments

University of Galway Safety Statement - Guidance Note on Biological Agents relevant to Support Service Staff
- Contractors

Unit Safety Statement Policy - C.17 University Support Staff Contract Personnel

Local Operational Control Summary - example from College of Engineering & Informatics

Buildings & Estates (Safety Management System) - Work in Laboratories (being updated).