Guidance Note for the Fire Safety Induction and Biennial Staff Familiarisation Training

(Ref: QM_HS_054)
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Queen Mary, University of London has a duty of care to ensure that all staff, students and visitors that utilise the buildings, facilities and campuses are familiar with the means of escape from their work areas as well as the emergency procedures to follow in the event of a fire alarm activation. This guidance is designed to accompany the Fire Induction / Familiarisation Form by providing practical and useful information to the Head of Department (HoD) or designated department personnel who will undertake local fire safety familiarisation for induction, at biennial intervals or after a change of work/environment purposes for employees, students or visitors.

1.2 The enforcing Authority (London Fire Brigade) have made it clear that they expect to see local induction and continued familiarisation for fire safety throughout the College and in their view, the Head of Department is responsible for ensuring that this local specific familiarisation is undertaken. Additionally, HoD must keep a record, in either hard copy or electronically of the familiarisation provided for all employees within their department as the enforcing authorities may want to examine records as evidence that adequate familiarisation has been given.

1.3 The familiarisation is not onerous. However, designated department trainers will need to be familiar with accommodation space, and the common and external areas within the buildings occupied by the department.

1.4 Definition: The term ‘Department’ is used in this guidance to describe all College Schools, Institutes and Professional Services Directorates.

Who should be trained?

1.5 New staff – College staff and others who will be working for more than 3 days in the Department must receive local induction familiarisation. Fire safety familiarisation is to include ‘action in the event of a fire’, ‘what to do on hearing the fire alarm’, how to leave the building by the local escape routes and where the Fire Assembly Point is located.

1.6 Biennial familiarisation of staff – all staff must undergo simple fire safety familiarisation every two years. All staff must complete the fire safety awareness e-learning course found on QMPlus including the fire safety quiz. Staff on sabbatical, maternity or sick leave etc. should be given a fire brief immediately on their return to work, irrespective of whether they are employed on a full or part time basis.

Change of working locations or work practices for staff – all staff exposed to new or increased risks, such as being transferred to another building or given a change of responsibilities must have additional fire safety familiarisation. This would apply to the introduction of new work equipment, a change in the work equipment already in use or the
introduction of new technology. Fire safety familiarisation may also be required after the introduction of a new system of work or a change in the system of work already in use, where these materially affect the action to be taken in the event of a fire related incident. Note: If staff work in several locations on a regular basis, then they should receive fire safety familiarisation for each location and a record of this training should be kept.

2.0 Expanded Information

2.1 Has the individual been involved in a fire evacuation or building in the past 12 months?

**Question 1 (if answer is YES to Q1)** the individual has participated in a fire evacuation whether a formal fire drill or any subsequent unwanted fire alarms over the past 12 months; there is no requirement for the individual to be physically walked along the fire escape routes to the Fire Assembly Point(s)

If answer is **NO** to Q1 – then the individual MUST be shown and physically walk the main and alternative fire escape route(s) to the Fire Assembly Point(s)

2.2 Is the individual familiar with their main and alternative escape routes from their place of work?

**Question 2 (if answer is YES to Q2)** – the individual is familiar with the escape route(s) due to buildings simple layout, regular use of routes, has participated in the past 12 months in a fire drill or unwanted fire alarm(s); there is no requirement for the individual to be physically conducted along the fire escape route(s) to the Fire Assembly Points

If answer is **NO** to Q2 – then the individual MUST be shown and physically travel the main and alternative fire escape route(s) to the Fire Assembly Point(s)

Note: New staff or Initial Induction of staff MUST BE physically conducted along all escape routes to the Fire Assembly Point.

2.3 How to raise the fire alarm on ‘discovering a fire’:

This information is available from the buildings Fire Action Notices positioned at Fire Alarm Call Points and by fire equipment throughout the premises:

**Raising the Fire Alarm:**

- On discovering a fire – operate the nearest fire alarm call point.
2.4 The action to be taken on hearing the ‘fire alarm’:

This information is available from the local building Fire Action Notices positioned at Fire Alarm Call Points and by fire equipment throughout the premises:

On hearing the fire alarm – leave the building by the **nearest available exit** (this may not necessarily be the way that occupants entered the building).

- CLOSE – all doors as occupants leave
- CLOSE - windows if you have time to do so without putting yourself at risk
- Do NOT – stop to collect personal belongings
- Do NOT – Use the lift
- Do NOT – re-enter the building until instructed to do so by the Fire Brigade Officer in Charge present or Security Personnel.

2.5 How to call the fire brigade (or emergency services) by dialling the appropriate telephone number:

**Mile End Campus Site** – Dial extension ‘3333’ on a College telephone that transfers the caller to the College Security Control Room (24 hours); the control room staff will then take the appropriate action.

**Other College Premises or Locations** – Dial 999, giving the operator the address, your name and the location of any fire and any further details deemed relevant. For embedded spaces there may be an alternative number to call and this number can be found on the fire action notices located throughout the building.

**Whitechapel** – Dial extension ‘3333’ on a College telephone that transfers the caller to the College Security Control Room (24 hours); the control room staff will then take the appropriate action.

**Charterhouse Square** – Dial extension ‘3333’ on a College telephone that transfers the caller to the College Security Control Room (24 hours); the control room staff will then take the appropriate action.

**Hospital Premises** – Dial extension ‘2222’ or ‘5555’, as appropriate for local building arrangements and instructions.

Note: All staff should be familiar with the local emergency arrangements for their work location – irrespective of whether or not it forms part of
the College, a College Institute, a Hospital building or other lease/rented property.

2.6 Physical travel of the fire escape routes

Note: For fire familiarisation purposes ALWAYS use and show the person receiving the training all escape routes regardless of local security alarms fitted to doors.

Note: if routes have alarmed doors, but are marked as fire escape routes, then seek assistance to disable door security alarms and show staff during the familiarisation session the door operation and the route beyond. Assistance regarding using these doors can be sought from local security staff, building managers or in some cases the College Fire Safety Team.
Note: local door security alarms DO NOT ACTIVATE the buildings Fire Alarm.

From the work area to all floor exits – staff should be shown all of the possible routes out of their work areas to the floor exits. This should include routes through adjoining rooms, corridors, all alternative stair enclosures, exit routes; and where appropriate, escape routes to stairs in adjoining building.

From fire exits on the floor on which the work area is situated to the relevant external exit doors of the building – When staff get to the escape stair(s) from the floor escape routes, walk staff down the stairs to the point where the stair enclosure discharges from the building to outside or into an adjoining building.

Physical travel of the route(s) to the location of the buildings Fire Assembly Point(s) – at the point where the stair enclosure (so forming part of the escape route) discharges from the building – show the door operation and walk staff to the Fire Assembly Point(s).

Note: When evacuating and proceeding to the Fire Assembly Point directly or via busy roads, staff should be reminded of the need to be aware of the potential traffic risk. Staff need to keep to pavements so as not to cause potential injury to themselves or become involved in road traffic accidents with vehicles, other pedestrians or cyclists etc.

The identification of fire and smoke resisting doors and their importance in preventing the spread of fire and smoke into occupants escape routes from the building – during the conducted tour along the escape routes, it is important to identify and show staff critical Fire Doors. These doors are generally identified and marked as ‘Fire Door Keep Shut/Closed’ or ‘Fire Door Keep Locked’ with the blue mandatory instruction signs. It is vital for these doors to be kept closed and NOT propped open or wedged open under any circumstances.
Where doors are marked ‘Automatic Fire Door Keep Clear’ then the doors release on activation of the fire alarm system, and any obstruction in front of the door will prevent them from closing and acting as a firebreak/smoke barrier.

Fire doors are critical in ensuring that fire/smoke is checked before entering escape routes such as stairs and corridors that form part of the escape routes – wedged doors allow smoke into these escape routes which occupants use to escape the building possibly placing lives at risk.

Fire doors are also provided onto rooms or areas that form a high fire risk, such as laboratories, plant rooms, kitchens, and storage areas etc. again to prevent fire/smoke affecting the means of escape for occupants.

Fire doors also make a major contribution to preventing the spread and minimising the effects of fire and smoke on the buildings structure, which may significantly affect, the Departments business continuity, research and teaching activities.

2.7 Demonstrate the following (if applicable):

The Emergency Door Release Mechanism – On the local walk through of the escape routes, staff should be shown the emergency door release mechanisms to ensure familiarisation with their operation. There are numerous types of door release mechanisms such as ‘Push Bars to Open’, Thumb Turn, ASSA/Union Dome Covers and Winchester Break Glass release devices etc. If you are unsure or have problems, you should contact your local safety coordinator or the College Fire Safety Team.

Note: Most doors fitted with electromagnetic locks will release automatically on activation of the fire alarm system. There are a small number of locations where for security reasons, these door locks will not release on activation of the fire alarm and need to be released manually.

2.8 In addition and where appropriate:

Informing individual members of staff of their ‘duty of care’ to assist in the evacuation of students, the public and disabled people. Members of staff, regardless of whether they are Fire Evacuation Marshalls (FEMs) have a duty of care to provide information and assistance to occupants that are unfamiliar with the premises. This is particularly necessary in those Departments who provide a service to the public, patients, or regularly have large numbers of students who are unfamiliar with the premises. All staff should assist in the initial instruction and evacuation of occupants from patient waiting areas, libraries, museums, cluster
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and seminar room, lecture theatres, students unions, union clubs and bars etc.

**Lifts** – Staff should be informed that, for safety reasons lifts are not to be used in the event of the fire alarm activating.

**Disabled Refuges** – the location of ‘local disabled refuges’, their communications systems and the local arrangements for assisting people with disabilities within the Department. Staff may need to be shown how to use Disabled Person Evacuation Chairs to assist colleagues and ensure there is a ‘buddy’ system for those persons in place.

Note: Compressed Gas Cylinders – the Fire Brigade at any incident need to be told about significant hazards, but in particularly the use and location of compressed gas cylinders whether in workshops or laboratories. Staff working with these cylinders must be aware of the significant hazard they represent and must ensure the Fire Brigade are made aware of the hazards by the Fire Evacuation Marshal (FEM) at any incident.

2.9 An explanation as to fire safety signs and their meaning:

Staff should be shown relevant fire safety signage that provides local information or instructions in particular:

- **Fire Action Notices** – College or local Fire Action Notices provide local information on the premises address, the emergency telephone number and the location of the Fire Assembly Point(s).

- **Fire Action Notices (Foreign Language)** – general foreign language fire action notices (no specific information on emergency number or assembly point information – so local briefing is required) are available from the College Fire Safety team to assist those persons for whom English is not their first language.

- **Door Signage** – for operating fire / escape door release mechanisms and electronic break glass devices.

- **‘Fire Alarm Activated – Do Not Enter’** – illuminated signs connected to the fire alarm system of adjoining buildings that do not have interconnected fire alarm systems at points where it is possible to walk from one building to another.

- **Signage General** – general safe condition, mandatory, warning and fire equipment information depicting their use and meaning.

2.10 Specific or other relevant local information / instructions:
Interconnected Fire Alarm Systems – if the building fire alarm systems are interconnected so that more than one building evacuates together, does this have an implication for the Departments evacuation procedure?

Fire Engineered Buildings – some buildings have been designed with a specific fire engineered strategy and design that has an impact on the fire safety arrangements such as the means of escape strategy or how the building space works and can be used by occupants.

2.11 Fire extinguishing equipment:

Only attempt to fight the fire if you have been formally trained and it is safe and practical to do so, using an appropriate type of fire extinguisher – if you do use a fire extinguisher:

- Always read the instructions before use.
- Do not use WATER on ELECTRICAL or FLAMMABLE LIQUID fires

2.12 Fire Evacuation Marshals (FEMs):

Staff should be aware of the role of the Fire Evacuation Marshal.

3.0 Further Guidance and Information to Assist in Providing Staff Fire Safety Familiarisation

3.1 How can biennial staff familiarisation be achieved by the Department?

3.1.1 Suggestions for carrying out Bi-Annual Staff Familiarisation:

Individual Familiarisation – staff could be taken around individually or in small batches in the 3rd term when quiet and there are few or no students present.

Departmental (group) staff Meetings – designated trainer could give a brief to assembled staff and then carry out a walk round of the department.

Department Group Familiarisation Sessions – show the FPA ‘Action in the Event of Fire’ video, then brief staff on local arrangements and escape routes.

3.2 Approved Fire Safety Familiarisation Videos (DVDs also Available) – that may be purchased directly by departments to assist in the fire familiarisation programme or borrowed from the Occupational Health and Safety Directorate.
3.3 **Other Sources of Fire Safety Information:**

A building’s emergency evacuation procedure is considered as part of the building's Fire Risk Assessment. Any deficiencies that impact on the means of escape identified during the fire risk assessment will be reflected in the fire risk assessment document and communicated to the relevant Duty Holder to allow for remedial works to be addressed within the recommended time frames.

3.4 **Familiarisation of Students**

It is good practice to provide students with some form of fire safety familiarisation so that they are aware of the actions to be taken in the event of a fire and the measures that can be taken to mitigate the effects of fire. This should include instruction on the:

- Details of the Fire Action notice information. In some large or specific buildings a more comprehensive brief may be required;
- Importance of fire doors and other basic fire-prevention measures;
- Importance of reporting to the assembly area;
- Exit routes, the operation of exit devices and that, for safety reasons, lifts are not to be used in the event of a fire alarm activation.
### Document Control

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<th>Keith Vagg</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Fire Safety Adviser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved by</td>
<td>Marion Richards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Director of Occupational Health and Safety</td>
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