Lone & Out of Hours Working Policy

PURPOSE

This policy is designed to guide all staff and postgraduate students of Dublin City University on the procedures required for lone or out of hours working.

NOTE: Unsupervised Out of Hours work by Undergraduate Students is strictly prohibited.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all units of the University, both academic and support, including research centres. These are all hereinafter collectively referred to as the 'University'.

Nothing in this policy shall supersede, in whole or in part, the duties of employers or employees under:

(a) Existing statutory provisions relevant to the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act;
(b) Common law;
(c) University Framework Safety Statement.

The University strongly recommends that in the interest of health, safety and personal security, lone / out of hours work should only be undertaken when absolutely necessary and no other alternatives are available.

DEFINITIONS

Lone working / out of hours working is defined as follows:

- Any Laboratory / Experimental work undertaken outside of 9am-6pm Monday to Friday
- Any other work (non-experimental) undertaken outside of 8am-6pm Monday to Friday
- Any work undertaken at Weekends or Bank Holidays.

It is noted that evening and weekend lectures are scheduled on a regular basis and that these activities constitute normal low risk activities. This policy is designed to address situations where staff members or postgraduate students are working alone out of hours or working in higher risk environments such as laboratories out of hours.

NOTE: All buildings must be vacated by 6pm on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank holidays when they will be subject to full lock-up.

NOTE: At Christmas & Easter the campuses may close down for a specified number of days and access will only be granted under exceptional circumstances.

The following risk categories apply to Lone / Out of Hours Working.

Category	Activity
Category A Risk (Unacceptable activity for Out of Hours)	Activities are to be carried out 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday only
Category B Risk (High)	Activities are to be carried out only by experienced researchers with another person to be present at all times (i.e. 'Buddy System') **Safezone 'Check-in' is compulsory**.
Category C Risk (Medium)	Activities are to be carried out by sufficiently competent researchers that may or may not require another person to be present as determined by the Supervisor / PI (i.e. 'Buddy System') **Safezone 'Check-in' is compulsory**.
Category D Risk (Low)	Activities are to be carried out by any postgraduate student / staff member (e.g. computer work / computing labs or lectures) **Safezone 'Check-in' is advised**.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head / Director of each School / Unit is responsible for implementing systems to ensure this policy is complied with.

Each Supervisor / Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for undertaking and approving a risk assessment for each activity under their remit, and categorising the risk associated with those activities in accordance with the definitions contained in the table above.

Based on an assessment of their experience and knowledge, each postgraduate student will be defined as competent by their Supervisor / PI for a range of activities within the risk categories established in the table above. Note: This assessment may be reviewed / upgraded periodically.

PROCEDURE

1) Training is mandatory for all persons requiring 'Out of Hours' access to engage in Category B & C activities. Training can be accessed by contacting the Health & Safety Office (e: safety@dcu.ie) or by other local arrangements such as the completion of the Faculty of Science and Health Safe Lab Module. A record of training should be returned to the Health and Safety Office.

2) Supervisor / PI completes an 'Out of Hours Risk Assessment' for each activity to be undertaken using the template provided in Appendix 1. This applies to all categories except low-risk category D work.

3) Once the Head / Director of School / Unit or delegate has authorised the risk assessment the Supervisor / PI should complete the 'Approval Form for Lone/Out of Hours Work' (see Appendix 2). Staff members in individual Schools / Units / centres will be considered competent to engage in Category D activities.

4) The approval form should be signed by the Supervisor and the person conducting the activity and then returned to the Head / Director of School / Unit and shared with the Health and Safety Office.

5) A listing of all persons approved for Out of Hours work will be shared with Security.

6) All authorised persons must login to the DCU Safe Zone App immediately on entering the building or as soon as their work activity is defined as 'Out of Hours' according to the definition section above.

   Note: In exceptional circumstances where the Safe Zone App is unavailable to the researcher, he / she must check in with Security on Ext. 5999 and similarly check out just before he / she leaves the building.

   Category B and Category C activities may require use of the SafeZone 'Check-In timer'. This function allows the user to check-in for a specified period after which an alert will be sent to Security if the user does not extend the period or 'Check-Out'. Typically, 'Check-In' is required at a minimum every hour.

7) Where the fire alarm is activated in the building after hours, those evacuating the building must assemble at the building fire assembly point. Otherwise, emergency services will assume that they are still in the building.

8) In order to ensure the safety and security of persons working in buildings 'out of hours', access to each building is strictly limited to those authorised by the School / Unit / Centre concerned. Authorised persons must not admit any other person to the building out of hours. Persons claiming to be authorised, but without a swipe access card or key, should be referred to Security.

9) Researchers or Staff members who in exceptional circumstances, due to the nature of their research work, require access during 'Lock-Up' must seek authorisation for such access from the

Vice-President for Research, using the 'Lock-up Exceptional Access Request Form' in Appendix 3. The Head of School / Centre Director will liaise with DCU Security to arrange such 'once-off' access.

10) Breaches of this policy will result in sanctions, including the revocation of out of hours access rights.

THE SAFEZONE APP

The University has launched a free app service to give round-the-clock safety reassurance to staff and students. SafeZone is a simple-to-use application that is *free* to download from the Apple App store and Google Play. Further details on the App and how to use it are available at this link.

POLICY REVIEW

A formal review will be carried out on a 3-year basis unless there is a change informed by legislation, best practice or incident analysis. If there are no amendments to the policy following the review process, the date and detail on the Version Control panel below will still be updated.

VERSION CONTROL

Document Name	Lone & Working Out of Hours Policy
Version Reference	V3.1
Owner	Health & Safety Office
Approved by	DCU Executive
Date	23rd February 2021

APPENDICES

1. Appendix 1 - Risk Assessment Form for Lone / Out of Hours Work
2. Appendix 2 - Approval Form for Lone / Out of Hours Work
3. Appendix 3 - Lock-up Exceptional Access Request Form

APPENDIX 1: Risk Assessment Form for Lone/Out of Hours Work

This form should be completed by the Supervisor / PI for any procedure / system of work to be carried out 'out of hours' by any staff member, postgraduate, postdoctoral worker or visitor.

Activity being assessed	
Name of Assessor	
Known or expected hazards associated with the activity (note also particular hazards if any due to lone working)	
Control Measures to be taken to reduce the level of risk	
Maximum possible harm with controls in place	
Training / Competence Prerequisite?	
Category of Risk Assigned	
Emergency Action to be taken 'out of hours'	
References, if any	

APPENDIX 2: Approval Form for Lone/Out of Hours Work

This Form to be completed by Academic Supervisor for each Postgraduate Student or Staff Member requiring 'Out of Hours' access

Approved Name			
School / Unit			
Category of Staff Member / Postgrad			
Locations where work will be conducted (*room numbers)*		**DCU Contact Ext:**	
Listing of Authorised Activities	**Risk Category**	**Buddy Req'd Y/N**	**SafeZone Check in Timer Required Y/N**
	Signature:	**Date:**	
Supervisor			
Staff Member/Postgraduate student			
Staff Member/Postgraduate student - Lone/Out of Hours Induction Training	**Version Number of Policy:**	**Date of training:**	

APPENDIX 3: Lock-Up* Exceptional Access Request

(Please complete & forward to the Head of School/Centre Director for authorisation)

Name of Requester (Academic Supervisor / Staff member)	
School / Centre / Unit	
Date & Time access is required	
Proposed Work	
Why can this work not be completed during normal / out of hours times?	
Has this work been risk assessed & signed off by Head of School / Centre?	
Names of those who require access**	
Locations where work will be carried out (Building & Room Number(s))	
Estimated duration of work (Start & Finish dates/times)	

I certify that I have read the DCU Out of Hours policy document and that the work detailed above complies with the terms and conditions of out of hours access

Signature of Requester: _____ Date: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY HEAD OF SCHOOL/CENTRE DIRECTOR

I HEREBY AUTHORISE EXCEPTIONAL ACCESS DURING 'LOCK UP' FOR THE DATES & TIMES & PERSONS NOTED ABOVE:

SIGNATURE: _____

PRINT NAME: _____

DATE: _____

HEAD OF SCHOOL / CENTRE DIRECTOR TO FORWARD AUTHORISATION BY E-MAIL TO THE HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICE (SAFETY@DCU.IE) AND SECURITY (HELPDESK.ESTATES@DCU.IE).

* Lock-Up = 6pm Saturday – 9am Sunday; 6pm Sunday – 7am Monday; 6pm Bank Holiday Monday – 7am Tuesday. Specified days (pre-notified) at Christmas & Easter.

** Those requiring access must already be authorised by Head of School / Centre to work 'Out of Hours'