



KAMUZU UNIVERSITY
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH POLICY

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Stakeholders Subjected to this Policy	Staff, students, consultants, vendors, contractors and/or any other parties with a business interest with the University.
Responsible Officer(s)	Registrar, Director of Student Affairs, University Legal Counsel, Executive Deans and Directors of Centres
Responsible Office(s):	Vice Chancellor

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FOREWORD

KUHeS recognises that its success is built upon the safety and health of every individual who contributes to its operations. This policy serves as a commitment to our responsibility and obligation to provide a work environment that safeguards the physical, mental, and emotional health of each member of our workforce.

Our commitment to occupational safety and health is not just a legal or regulatory requirement; it is a fundamental belief that underpins our core values. As we grow and evolve, we remain steadfast in our pledge to prioritize the prevention of accidents, injuries, and illnesses. This policy sets forth the guiding principles, priority areas and standards that will shape our daily operations, decisions, and practices.

Every level of management is accountable for the safety and well-being of our employees. Safety is a collective effort that requires active leadership and participation. We are committed to identifying potential hazards and evaluating associated risks across all aspects of our operations. By proactively addressing these risks, we ensure a safe working environment.

Every member of the KUHeS family is encouraged to embrace this policy and actively participate in its execution. Let us stand united in our pursuit of a safer, healthier, and more fulfilling work environment.



Professor Francis Moto
Chairman of the Council

PREFACE

In today's rapidly evolving world, the significance of ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of our workforce cannot be overstated. As we navigate complex challenges and pursue our institutional goals, it is imperative that we prioritize the fundamental rights of our employees the right to work in an environment free from harm.

The KUHeS Occupational Safety and Health Policy is a fundamental document that embodies our commitment to creating and maintaining a culture of safety. It reflects our dedication to safeguarding the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of our valued employees, students and stakeholders.

At KUHeS, we firmly believe that every employee deserves to work in an environment where risks are identified and controlled, and safety is a shared responsibility. Our commitment reflects our shared dedication to fostering an environment where everyone feels secure, respected, and empowered.

Thank you for joining us on this journey to prioritize safety and health above all else. Together, we will create a workplace that exemplifies excellence through unwavering commitment to the well-being of our workforce.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate the team which spearheaded the development of this policy.



Professor MacPherson Mallewa

Vice Chancellor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Policy is the result of several players working together. Kamuzu University of Health Sciences has put in time and resources to enable this work. We thank the following technical team members under the leadership of Dr Mwakikunga, for making this policy a reality: Mr Stuart Chirambo, Dr Idessi Chilinda, Dr John Phuka, Dr Albert Mwafongo, Dr Francis Chiumia, Mrs Pauline Katundu, Mrs Mary Chumachao, Ms Laher Beverly and Mr Wilson Kumwenda. The Team appreciates KUHeS Management for their guidance and financial support.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

KUHeSSU	Kamuzu University of Health Sciences Staff Union
KUHeS	Kamuzu University of Health Sciences
OSH	Occupational Health and Safety
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment

DEFINITIONS

Safety Occupational Health

Vendor

Stakeholders

Hazzards

Risks

Ergonomics

Workplace - also include work related

1. BACKGROUND

KUHeS, as centre of learning, research, excellence and innovation has the responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for all members of its community. The KUHeS Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Policy reflects our commitment to the well-being of our students, staff, researchers, and stakeholders.

Incorporating the best practices of occupational health and safety into our daily operations is not only a legal requirement but also a moral imperative. By prioritizing the health and safety of our university community, we ensure that everyone can fully engage in their academic pursuits, research endeavours, and personal growth without unnecessary risks.

2. SCOPE

The KUHeS OSH encompasses a wide range of activities, facilities, and interactions within the University community. Its scope is comprehensive, reflecting our dedication to creating a culture of safety that extends beyond the boundaries of classrooms and laboratories.

Our commitment to safety begins with the design, construction, and maintenance of our physical facilities. From state-of-the-art laboratories to student residences, every building and structure must adhere to rigorous safety standards to minimize risks and promote well-being.

Classrooms, laboratories, workshops, and research facilities are at the heart of our academic and scientific endeavours. We implement measures to ensure that these spaces are equipped with the necessary safety equipment, protocols, and training to support the pursuit of knowledge without compromising anyone's safety and health.

Our staff are essential contributors to our academic mission. We strive to provide them with a safe and healthy work environment that fosters productivity, engagement, and professional growth.

We recognize that our students are engaged in a diverse array of activities, both within and beyond the classroom. Whether participating in sports, clubs/associations, or events, their safety remains a top priority, and measures are in place to minimize risks associated with these activities.

In addition to preventing risks, we provide access to health and well-being services for all members of our community. This includes medical assistance, counselling, and resources to promote physical and mental health. Our OSH Policy aligns with relevant laws, regulations, and industry standards, both local and international. We are committed to periodic reviews, assessments, and audits to ensure that our practices are current and effective.

Accidents and emergencies can happen, and we are prepared to respond swiftly and effectively. Our University community is educated about emergency protocols and procedures to ensure a coordinated and organized response. Raising awareness and providing education about occupational health and safety is essential. We offer training programs, information sessions, and resources to empower our community to take an active role in maintaining a safe environment.

By establishing a robust Occupational Safety and Health Policy, [KUHeS demonstrates its unwavering commitment to fostering an environment where academic excellence, personal growth, and safety converge. This policy affirms to our dedication to nurturing the holistic development of every member of our community, today and in the years to come.

3. RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY

The rationale for a OSH Policy extends far beyond mere compliance. It reflects an institution's commitment to its core values, and its broader responsibilities to the society. By prioritizing safety and well-being, KUHeS creates a thriving environment that nurtures growth,

innovation, and academic achievement. Therefore, this policy is rooted in the following crucial considerations:

3.1 Human Safety and Well-being

The primary rationale for an OSH Policy in the University is to protect and enhance the safety and well-being, of all individuals within the University. Faculty, staff, students, researchers, and visitors deserve an environment free from unnecessary risks such as, work place accidents, injuries and illnesses.

In addition, a safer and healthier University environment contributes positively to the surrounding community. By setting an example of responsible and safe practices, the University can extend its influence beyond its campus borders.

3.2 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Many jurisdictions require Universities to establish and maintain a workplace that adheres to occupational health and safety regulations. Institutions face a range of potential risks, from accidents and injuries to legal liabilities. A comprehensive OSH Policy minimizes these risks, protecting the institution from financial and reputational harm.

3.3 Academic Excellence

A safe and healthy environment enhances motivation, retention and productivity of students and staff, to focus on their academic pursuits. By reducing the risks associated with accidents and illnesses, the University provides a supportive and nurturing environment, which attracts prospective students, staff, and collaborators.

3.4 Research and Innovation

The OSH Policy is essential to the integrity of research projects. Laboratories and research facilities must adhere to safety protocols to protect researchers, preserve data integrity, and prevent accidents that could compromise the validity of experiments.

3.5 Environmental Sustainability

A commitment to safety often aligns with environmentally sustainable practices. These include proper waste disposal, efficient resource usage, and adherence to safety protocols that contribute to a University's efforts to reduce its environmental impact.

4. KUHES VISION

A world-class university and centre of excellence in health education, research, and innovation.

5. KUHES MISSION

To advance knowledge, professional competencies, skills, and innovations in health sciences through high-quality student-centered and innovative education and research that responds to and influences the global/national policy, health, and development needs in an efficient, sustainable, and result-oriented manner.

6. AIM OF THE POLICY

The aim of the OS Policy is to establish a comprehensive, proactive, and inclusive approach for ensuring the health, safety and well-being of students, staff and stakeholders. This Policy outlines the commitment of the University to prioritise the prevention of work-related injuries, illnesses, hazards as well as the promotion of a safe and healthy working environment for all.

7. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the occupational health and safety policy are to:

- a. Prevent accidents, injuries, and illnesses across all University operations
- b. Ensure that the University complies with relevant local, national, and international laws, regulations, and standards.
- c. Establish emergency response plans, to enable swift, and effective response to various emergency situations.

- d. Foster a culture of shared responsibility for safety and health for staff, students and collaborators.
- e. Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of safety and health in the workplace.

8. POLICY PRIORITY AREAS

The Priority areas for this Policy address the unique safety and health risks and challenges faced by the University. This will make sure that it prevents accidents, injuries, and illnesses across all operations by identifying potential hazards, assessing risks, and implementing effective controls to eliminate or mitigate these risks.

8.1 Policy Priority 1: Workplace Safety

In order to ensure workplace safety KUHeS will look into the following areas:

a. Management of Hazards

- i. hazards, risks identification, prevention and control e.g. fire, electricity
- ii. establish assembly points and create awareness to users
- iii. provide first aid facilities and equipment as required
- iv. provide basic life support training to staff
- v. orient users on fire management based on standard requirements
- vi. ensure that fire extinguishers are well maintained and in usable condition
- vii. install visible sign posts for fire extinguishers and assembly points
- viii. ensure that the infrastructure has multiple accessible exit points
- ix. promote disability friendly infrastructure and workplace environment
- x. ensure that smoke detectors and alarms are installed, operational and maintained

- xi. maintain vehicles and equipment
- xii. ensure that personnel are aware on how to use and maintain their personal protective equipment
- xiii. Administer prerequisite vaccines to students and staff

b. Ergonomic Awareness and Assessments

- i. Conduct ergonomic assessments of workstations to identify potential risks and discomfort factors.
- ii. Offer recommendations for proper seating, keyboard placement, monitor height, and lighting.
- iii. Educate employees about the importance of maintaining proper posture and taking breaks during long periods of computer work.
- iv. Provide guidance on exercises and stretches to prevent ergonomic-related discomfort.

8.2 Policy Priority Area 2: Laboratory Safety

a. Risk Assessment and Management

- i. Conduct thorough risk assessments for all activities involving hazardous materials or equipment.
- ii. Implement effective control measures to minimize risks, including engineering controls, personal protective equipment (PPE), and administrative controls.

b. Training and Education

- i. Provide comprehensive safety training for researchers, lab personnel, and students involved in laboratory activities.
- ii. Ensure that individuals are knowledgeable about handling hazardous substances, emergency procedures, and equipment operation.

c. Emergency Response

- i. Develop clear procedures for responding to laboratory accidents, chemical spills, and other emergencies.

- ii. Establish communication protocols to promptly notify relevant personnel and emergency services.

d. Equipment Management and Maintenance

- i. Regularly inspect and maintain laboratory equipment to prevent malfunctions that could pose safety risks.
- ii. Provide guidelines for proper calibration, maintenance, and repair procedures.

8.3 Policy Priority Area 3: Classroom and Teaching Spaces

a. Safe Classroom Layout

- i. Design and arrange classrooms to facilitate safe movement and clear evacuation routes.
- ii. Ensure proper lighting, ventilation, and ergonomic seating arrangements.

b. Emergency Preparedness

- i. Train instructors to lead emergency evacuations and provide students with clear instructions on evacuation procedures.
- ii. Ensure that emergency exits are clearly marked and accessible.
- iii. Assign fire assembly points to academic classes

c. Safety during Practical Sessions

- i. Outline safety protocols for hands-on practical sessions, including proper use of equipment and materials.
- ii. Address the safe handling and storage of chemicals and specimens used in teaching.

8.4 Policy Priority Area 4: Hazardous Materials Management

a. Inventory and Labelling

- i. Maintain an accurate inventory of hazardous materials present within the University.

- ii. Clearly label all containers with information about the contents, hazards, and handling instructions.

b. Storage and Disposal

- i. Establish guidelines for proper storage conditions, segregation of incompatible materials, and safe disposal methods.
- ii. Train personnel on proper waste disposal and recycling practices.
- iii. Establish designated areas for incineration

c. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- i. Identify situations where PPE is required and specify the minimum standards of PPE needed (e.g., gloves, goggles, respirators).
- ii. Emphasize the importance of proper fitting, usage, and maintenance of PPE.

8.5 Policy Priority Area 5: Emergency Preparedness and Response

a. Emergency Response Plan

- i. Develop a comprehensive emergency response plan that covers various types of emergencies, such as fires, natural disasters, medical incidents, and chemical spills.
- ii. Assign roles and responsibilities to individuals who will lead and coordinate response activities.

b. Communication Protocols

- i. Establish clear communication channels for alerting relevant parties about emergencies.
- ii. Provide guidelines for communicating with emergency services, campus security, and other stakeholders.

c. Evacuation Procedures

- i. Outline evacuation routes, assembly points, and procedures for evacuating buildings safely.
- ii. Consider individuals with mobility challenges and provide alternative evacuation methods.

8.6 Policy Priority Area 6: Mental Health and Well-being:

a. Counseling Services

- i. Ensure access to confidential counselling services for students and staff to address mental health concerns.
- ii. Promote these services through awareness campaigns and communication channels.

b. Stress Reduction Programs

- i. Implement stress reduction workshops, mindfulness sessions, and wellness activities to support mental well-being.
- ii. Encourage work-life balance and the use of available resources for stress management.
- iii. Encourage staff to go for leave

c. Mental Health Awareness

- i. Disseminate information about mental health, common challenges and support services available
- ii. Provide resources to reduce stigma and encourage open discussions.

8.7 Policy Priority Area 7: Construction and Maintenance Safety

a. Contractor Guidelines

- i. Establish safety requirements for contractors working on university premises, including safety orientations and compliance with University policies.
- ii. Require contractors to provide documentation of their safety plans and procedures.

b. Safety Inspections

- i. Conduct regular safety inspections of construction and maintenance sites to identify hazards and ensure compliance with safety standards.
- ii. Address issues promptly and document corrective actions taken.

c. Communication and Collaboration

- i. Foster communication and collaboration among University staff, students and contractors to ensure mutual understanding of safety protocols and expectations.

8.8 Policy Priority Area 8: Student Activities and Events

a. Risk Assessment

- i. Require event organizers to conduct risk assessments for all student activities and events, considering factors such as crowd management, venue safety, and emergency exits.
- ii. Submit the risk assessment report to the responsible officers to ensure compliance.

b. Safety Guidelines

- i. Provide guidelines for organizing safe and inclusive events; addressing issues like food safety, first aid availability, and participant accommodations.

c. Security and Crowd Control

- i. Establish security measures and protocols to manage large gatherings and prevent unauthorized access.
- ii. Ensure appropriate crowd control measures during events to prevent accidents and emergencies.

9. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Guiding principles for the implementation of KUHeS OSH Policy provides a framework that directs actions, decisions, and behaviours to ensure that the policy is effectively put into practice. These principles

are essential for creating a culture of safety, accountability, and continuous improvement. To support the implementation of the OSH policy, the following guiding principles will be followed:

a. Leadership Commitment

University leadership, including senior management and administrators, must demonstrate unwavering commitment to the OSH Policy. They should actively support and champion safety initiatives, allocate necessary resources, and lead by example to establish a culture where safety and health is paramount.

b. Employee Involvement and Empowerment

Engage all members of the university community, including students, staff, collaborators and stakeholders, in the OSH implementation process. Empower them to contribute their insights, report hazards, and participate in decision-making related to safety. Fostering a sense of ownership encourages a collective commitment to safety and health.

c. Proactive Hazard Identification and Mitigation

Prioritize proactive measures to identify and mitigate potential hazards before they result in incidents. Encourage routine risk assessments, regular safety inspections, and the implementation of preventive controls to minimize risks across various University activities and environments.

d. Training and Education

Provide comprehensive training and education programs to ensure that individuals have the knowledge and skills to work safely. Tailor training to the specific needs of different roles and activities, covering areas such as laboratory safety, emergency response, ergonomic practices, and hazard recognition. Integrate

safety and health training into Departmental training plans including online and physical trainings.

e. Continuous Improvement and Learning

Promote a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging individuals to learn from incidents, near-misses, and feedback. Implement mechanisms for reporting incidents and near-misses, conducting thorough investigations, and implementing corrective actions to prevent future occurrences.

f. Open Communication and Collaboration

Establish transparent communication channels that facilitate the exchange of safety-related information, best practices, and concerns. Encourage collaboration between departments, units, and individuals to share insights and contribute to the ongoing enhancement of safety and health measures.

g. Accountability and Responsibility

Define roles, responsibilities, and accountability for safety throughout the university. Hold all individuals, from top leadership to individual employees, accountable for adhering to safety protocols, participating in training, and actively contributing to a safe environment.

h. Compliance with Regulations and Standards

Ensure strict adherence to local, national, and international laws, regulations, and standards related to occupational health and safety. Stay updated on evolving regulations and adjust policies and practices accordingly to maintain compliance.

i. Measurement and Performance Evaluation

Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the effectiveness of safety initiatives and practices. Regularly assess progress against these KPIs, analyze trends, and use data to inform decision-making and refine strategies.

j. Recognition and Positive Reinforcement

Recognize and celebrate individuals and teams that demonstrate outstanding commitment to safety. Positive reinforcement encourages a culture where safety-conscious behaviours are acknowledged and appreciated.

k. Coordination of OSH

Establish an office that will be responsible for the coordination and implementation of OSH related activities.

By embedding these guiding principles into the implementation of the OSH Policy, the University creates a comprehensive and sustainable framework for ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of its entire community. These principles serve as the foundation for cultivating a culture of safety excellence that becomes an integral part of the university's identity.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation are essential components of an effective Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) Policy implementation at a university. They ensure that the policy's objectives are being met, identify areas for improvement, and provide a mechanism for

continuous enhancement of safety measures. Monitoring and evaluating the OSH Policy shall include:

- a. Define a set of relevant KPIs that align with the OSH Policy's objectives and priority areas. KPIs should be measurable, specific, and reflective of different aspects of safety performance within the university context. Examples of KPIs include incident rates, training completion rates, hazard identification reports, and emergency response times.
- b. Establish a system for collecting relevant data related to safety metrics and KPIs. This can include incident reports, inspection findings, training records, and feedback from safety committees. Ensure that data is consistently and accurately recorded to provide a clear picture of safety performance.
- c. Conduct routine safety inspections and audits across various university facilities and activities. These assessments should be performed by trained individuals who can identify hazards, assess risk controls, and provide recommendations for improvements.
- d. Implement a robust incident reporting system that encourages individuals to report accidents, near-misses, and hazardous conditions. Analyze incident data to identify trends, root causes, and recurring issues that require corrective actions.
- e. Assess the university's compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and standards related to occupational health and safety. Conduct internal audits or engage external experts to review practices and identify areas of non-compliance.
- f. Evaluate the effectiveness of safety training programs by assessing participants' understanding of safety protocols and their ability to apply them in real-life situations. Use assessments to identify gaps in training and tailor programs accordingly.
- g. Conduct periodic emergency response drills to evaluate the effectiveness of evacuation procedures, communication

protocols, and coordination among responders. Debrief after drills to identify areas for improvement.

- h. Engage the university's safety committee or advisory group in the monitoring and evaluation process. Regularly review safety data, incident reports, and proposed corrective actions to make informed recommendations for improvement.
- i. Compare the university's safety performance with industry benchmarks and best practices. This external perspective can provide insights into areas where improvements are needed and identify innovative solutions.
- j. Incorporate safety performance evaluations into regular performance reviews for employees. Provide constructive feedback and recognition for individuals and teams that contribute to a safe environment.
- k. Based on monitoring and evaluation findings, implement corrective actions and improvements. Develop action plans that address identified weaknesses, enhance existing controls, and establish new measures to prevent future incidents.
- l. Regularly communicate safety performance data and evaluation outcomes to all stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Encourage open dialogue and feedback to create a culture of transparency and collaboration.

- m. Maintain comprehensive records of monitoring and evaluation activities, including findings, actions taken, and outcomes. Use these records to demonstrate the university's commitment to safety and compliance.

By implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, the university ensures that its OSH Policy remains dynamic, effective, and aligned with its mission of providing a safe and supportive environment for all community members. Regular assessments and continuous

improvement efforts contribute to the ongoing enhancement of safety practices and the overall well-being of the university community.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Implementing an effective Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) Policy at a university involves financial considerations that encompass various aspects. While the costs associated with OSH implementation are an investment in the well-being of the university community, it's essential to plan and allocate resources strategically. Here are some financial implications to consider:

a. Personnel and Staffing

Employ or designate a dedicated OSH professional responsible for policy implementation, training, hazard assessment, and monitoring. This role ensures that OSH initiatives are coordinated effectively.

b. Training and Education

- i. Budget for safety training programs tailored to various roles and activities within the university. This includes faculty, staff, researchers, students, and contractors.
- ii. Allocate funds for specialized training and certifications related to emergency response, hazardous materials handling, and other relevant topics.

c. Equipment and Resources

- i. Provide necessary PPE such as gloves, goggles, lab coats, and respiratory protection for different departments and
- ii. Invest in safety devices like fire extinguishers, first aid kits, eyewash stations, and emergency lighting.

d. Facilities and Infrastructure

- i. Plan for modifications to facilities, classrooms, and laboratories to align with safety standards and ergonomic considerations.

- ii. Allocate funds for the installation and maintenance of emergency alarms, evacuation signage, and safety lighting.
- e. Hazard Mitigation and Controls:**
- i. Budget for engineering solutions such as ventilation systems, fume hoods, and safety enclosures to control and reduce hazards.
 - ii. Invest in software and systems for managing safety data, incident reporting, and compliance tracking.
- f. Audits and Inspections:**
- i. Allocate resources for periodic external audits and assessments by qualified safety professionals to evaluate compliance and identify areas for improvement.
 - ii. Budget for internal safety inspections and audits conducted by designated staff or safety committees.
- g. Emergency Preparedness and Response:**
- i. Plan for regular emergency response drills, including costs associated with coordinating drills, simulating scenarios, and assessing effectiveness.
 - ii. Invest in communication tools such as alert systems, two-way radios, and mass notification systems.
- h. Counselling and Well-being Services**
- i. Allocate funds for providing accessible and confidential mental health counselling services to support students, faculty, and staff.
 - ii. Budget for wellness programs and initiatives that promote mental health, stress reduction, and work-life balance.
- i. Documentation and Reporting**
- i. Invest in digital tools and software for incident reporting, data collection, and performance monitoring.

- ii. Allocate resources for maintaining accurate records of safety assessments, training completion, incident reports, and corrective actions.

j. Continuous Improvement Initiatives

- i. Allocate funds for implementing corrective actions and improvements identified through monitoring and evaluation processes.
- ii. Consider costs associated with engaging external safety consultants for expert guidance and recommendations.

k. Communication and Awareness:

- i. Set aside a budget for awareness campaigns, posters, workshops, and training materials to promote a culture of safety across the university.

The investment in safety contributes to the overall success, reputation, and sustainability of the institution. Regularly reviewing and adjusting the budget as necessary ensures that safety measures remain effective and aligned with evolving needs.