

Imperial College Student Union

Health and Safety Inspection Report

Conducted on Wednesday, 13th November 2019

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Report circulated to:

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Background to the inspection:

The Student Union (SU) was audited in 2016 with a follow-up inspection arranged earlier this year, scheduled for 15th November 2019.

Jarlath O'Hara, the head of the SU was invited to join the inspection but did not appear and no reason for his absence was given.

NOTE: The inspection covered many areas in a short period, so there was insufficient time to spend on any one area. It did not include every part of the Student Union Building.

Summary of findings

Whilst this was not an audit, it was obvious from inspection and discussion with the SU safety representative, that the findings and recommendations from the 2016 audit have not been implemented.

1. There is no management oversight, no competent health and safety advice, no inspections (except those which began two weeks ago), and no specific training (for example around the use and control of deep fat fryers), and possibly no planned preventative maintenance, or risk assessments.
2. Incidents, ill-health and accidents are not always reported to the College.
3. There are other aspects of concern relating to the Student Union management, including lack of oversight and inspections at Charing Cross (Reynolds Building bar, cellar and CSP areas), CSP activities at Putney Boathouse, Ethos, and at the Silwood Festival (which is to be audited in 2020).

Recommendations:

- a) The Student Union are required to implement and provide written progress report on 2016 audit. It was agreed at the pre-inspection meeting, that this would be undertaken by the DSO and Head of Student Experience along with the production of an action plan with priorities, timescales and action owners to be sent to the College Safety Auditor by the end of **November 2019**. However, the DSO is not present to help undertake the task as he is on leave until the beginning of December.
 - b) Fully implement the College incident reporting system (via SALUS).
 - c) A full inspection of all the SU areas on every campus is required as soon as possible, along with an annual re-inspection schedule.
4. Competence in health and safety not just having about the qualifications; being proactive, with knowledge, experience, foresight and good communication skills is more important. The current DSO does not have the skills, underpinning knowledge or experience to undertake a role of this size and complexity. There are over four hundred clubs and societies with activities which are considered high risk (scuba, caving etc), let alone the general running of the Union. The role is too big for one person alone.

Recommendation:

- a) Employ a competent safety manager. Establish the safety management reporting and communication structure. Identify the areas and locations where DSOs are needed; identify, train and resource relevant persons and students as appropriate. The Audit Team are happy to mentor staff to acquire or build on existing safety inspection skills.
5. Several rooms, cupboards and risers within the SU building appear to have been taken over by Club and Societies (CSPs), who have filled with years of unwanted items and rubbish. Locks have been forced in some areas and replaced with padlocks, so neither the SU or BM have access. This may also be the case at CX, Reynolds Building.

Recommendation:

- a) The SU management (in conjunction with the Building Manager as some risers are included), need to take back control of spaces and keys, and establish a monitoring and inspection programme for areas currently "controlled" by the CSPs.
6. The Student Union building which includes student and hotel accommodation out of Term, is suffering from lack of care and lack of control of students' and other activities within.
 7. In its existing state of repair and with its current standard of operations, there is likely to be a substantial fire risk.

Recommendation:

- a) Clarity is needed between the Student Union and Estates as to the boundaries of ownership, maintenance, repair and replacement, statutory testing and inspection, and the provision of soft services. This might be via a memorandum of understanding with various arrangements detailed or a service level agreement.
- b) Install suppression systems into the kitchen extract ventilation systems, train staff accordingly.

Detailed inspection findings

Each of the following findings needs a corresponding Student Union action, with priority, action owner and date of completion. For locations see OneNote: [Student Union inspection November 2019](#) ([Web view](#))

Fire safety

This is the biggest concern throughout (the Fire Risk Assessment was not available at the time)

- Statutory testing for pressure systems in the cellar is out of date.
- Gas safety in the cellar area does not appear to be managed.
- PAT for many electrical items was out of date by years.
- **Electrical safety** including the proliferation of extension cables in dry and wet areas is unmanaged.
- There appears to be some home-made electrical connections (the fan in the club, lighting in the shuttered room at the rear of the stage).
- One riser cupboard at the back of the club - a high-risk Estates plant area - is being used by the CSPs for access to their lighting rig controls.
- The use of deep fat fryers, untrained staff, no fire suppression system and ducts that go through the building is a fire risk.
- The building is also an accommodation block.
- There were many damaged smoke compartments, so in the event of a fire the spread of fire and smoke could be rapid and unpredictable.
- Housekeeping and uncontrolled fire-loading, is a major concern throughout, particularly in seldom visited rooms and on protected stairwells (where there are prayer mats stored), and in the voids beneath the stages.
- The roof has several means of escape, but who checks each day, that these are clear and free for use?
- Many fire doors are damaged.
- How are GEEPs and PEEPs managed for visitors and for staff?
- Who looks after the Evac chairs and trains staff in their use?
- Risers and HV distribution boards were found open or damaged.
- Missing and out of date or inaccessible fire extinguishers throughout – the cellar room accessed by ladder may need an extinguisher and the fire escape route to the street needs signage.

Access control

Several small rooms, in apparently seldom-visited areas, seem either to be inaccessible to the Building Manager, or the Student Union management, or access seems to be shared with them.

- The concern is that CSPs have taken these over for themselves as in some instances locks have been forced and hasps and staples added. This is a further fire risk, particularly given that the rooms have been filled with rubbish. One specific CSP room if cleared could be used to store the prayer mats.
- Some of the roof doors could be accessed by students or unauthorised persons if the swipe or locks fail. What checks are made for access control, means of escape and fire loading/fire alarms?
- Missing window restrictors - student mental health is a concern, as is access control and the uncontrolled spread of fire.

Asbestos

- The building contains asbestos, a concern if CSPs are undertaking their own minor works. Asbestos warning labels are missing in the stage area.

Food and cellar hygiene

Given the lack of management oversight and monitoring, it's unsurprising that the findings from this brief inspection were so poor.

- Control around BBQs is required - we entered at 2pm and left at 5pm; BBQ equipment, gas cylinders and food was uncovered at the beginning and end of the day. Was it all waste?
- The BBQ grill looked dirty. We did not have sufficient time to check the outside store.

Inspection process

An inspection briefing meeting was held to discuss lack of progress on the 2016 audit and the associated recent failings of the Beit Kitchen, along with the required actions.

The inspection team was split into two groups to enable more areas to be covered:

Team 1: Bottom of Beit Union Building, and West staircase:

Julia Cotton, Malcolm Martin (SU DSO), Tom Newman, Martin Benson (Building Manager), Steve Walker (Fire Officer).

Team 2: Top of Beit Union Building, and East staircase:

Audrey Plaquin-Chan, Zonya Christian, Maria Grigsby, Sangita Kerai.

The following areas were amongst those inspected:

- All meeting rooms MR1, 2, 3, 4 and 6
- Snooker Room
- East staircase (all levels) and all doors / related storage areas
- Activity spaces 1 & 2
- Union Dining Hall and Union Dining Hall kitchen, West staircase
- Union Concert Hall (and all areas and rooms behind the stage, including room under the stage)
- Gym and all related storage areas
- Offices on Levels 2 and 2M
- FiveSixEight, Union Bar and Metric

The main union kitchen was excluded from this inspection as it was to be inspected by an external provider, Karl Bott, and some improvement works have already been scheduled by the Building Manager, and there was insufficient time to potentially duplicate effort.

Beit Kitchen (and Staff Dining Room kitchen)

There has been a multi-layered management failure of both of Beit's kitchen – indicative of the failure of the Student Union to implement the previous audit's key findings:

- Health and safety management system aligned with College.
- Local arrangements described in COP
- Roles and responsibilities defined
- Training needs identified and met including Leadership training for Board, risk assessment training.
- Structure defined and safety management arrangements aligned with this.
- Competent safety advice and structure
- Risks identified and recorded with risk owners.
- Risk assessments conducted
- Risk assessment management process for assessing recording checking approval and review along with checks on validity of controls, and emergency procedures should controls fail.
- Overall lack of control.

Summary conclusion

The Student Union's management must take full responsibility for their building and the activities within. It must establish, resource and maintain the safety management structure and associated health and safety management system, to prevent problems like these from recurring.

Selection of images from the inspection



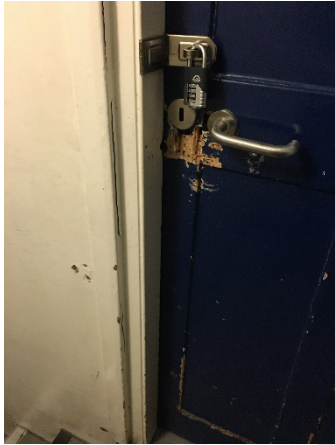
Cellar: Drain pipe has been leaking in the cellar area for some time, but not reported.



Cellar: CO2 cylinder apparently used to prop up the ice machine.



Cellar: Unsecured, overloaded, rusting racking holding boxes of lemons in unsuitable environment.



Nightclub area: One of several doors to which the SU has no key and no idea what lay behind, like CX. Are CSPs taking over their own space? If so, this cannot continue.



Nightclub area: Open riser is accessed by CSPs (?) to alter lighting rig controls. This is an Estates Riser containing a distribution board. This is an unauthorised use of a high-risk area.



Nightclub area: SU staff aware of custom and practice to wedge open fire doors. Daily check needed, removal of wedge, and discussion with cleaners.



Staff Dining Kitchen: Two 25L drums oil leaking onto floor. Major slip hazard.



Prayer mats in protected stair well outside kitchen with deep fat fryer with no fire suppression system.



Small store room adjacent to stairwell full of junk which could be used for prayer mats if cleared.