



Supervision of Students Policy

INDEX

1.	Introduction
2.	Purpose
3.	Scope
4.	Policy: Students Working in Teaching Rooms Project Work for Special Consideration
5.	Roles and Responsibilities
6.	Exceptions
7.	Amendments
8.	Key Contacts
9.	Contact
Appendix A	Example room categorization signage

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

The University of Wolverhampton has duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees and make similar provision for non-employees including students and visitors who may be affected by the University's activities.

During formal classes the health and safety of students is the prime responsibility of the member of teaching staff timetabled to be in charge (supplemented by technical staff) and such responsibility will involve proper adherence to accepted health and safety standards.

2. Purpose

For the purpose of this policy, both "supervising" and "supervision" apply in a health and safety context as opposed to the accepted academic interpretation which relates to satisfactory progress and quality of work assessment, etc.

The nature and extent of the levels of supervision required to discharge this responsibility will depend on a risk assessment of the following:

- The nature of the processes and activities to be undertaken.
- The degree of potential risk involved, including any machinery and/or equipment available for use.
- The level of experience and competence of the students involved.
- A judgement based upon the physical layout of the facilities (for example, any dangerous equipment in situ).
- A judgement based upon the remoteness of the classroom, laboratory studio or workshop, etc. in relation to accessing assistance in the event of an emergency, including out of hours access.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all university staff, academic and technical, who have responsibility for the supervision of students in a teaching environment.

4. Policy

Minimum Supervision Requirements for Students Working in Teaching Rooms

The following rules will apply to work by students in classrooms, laboratories studios and workshops, at any time when there is no direct supervision by lecturing, demonstrating or technical staff and apply especially to "out of hours" working.

Out of hours should be understood as all periods when there are few classes in the buildings, for example:

- Outside of the core hours of operation (this may differ from building to building) and in areas where there are no evening classes in progress.
- On Saturdays and Sundays; and
- During Student vacation periods.

In all cases of out of hours student access, there must be a mechanism for ensuring each individual student's arrival and departure is recorded. In some Faculties, and subject to the potential level of risk, students may be asked to declare details of the activity in which they will be engaging in and possibly even to submit a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for approval, prior to the work taking place.

Students must be informed that they must never use equipment with which they have not been trained to use and any such equipment should be made inaccessible. In some areas it will be appropriate to devise a system of logging the equipment students have been trained to use, with a signature from academic or technical staff certifying the fact, this is sometimes referred to as a 'competency passport'.

The activity taking place within classrooms, laboratories, studios, and workshops, etc. will determine the room category as follows:

Category A: (This includes classrooms with low-risk activities and equipment e.g., laptops and notebooks, or a rehearsal space/studio where an activity assessed as low risk is taking place.)

Provided that all necessary security measures for prevention/deterrence of theft/vandalism have been taken, students may work unsupervised. It is expected that any potentially dangerous equipment in situ, has been isolated or access has been suitably restricted by some other means.

Category B: (This includes laboratories/workshops/studios, etc. containing only standard mechanical or 240V electrical equipment, or low risk science equipment, chemicals, etc.)

Research students may work unsupervised if they have written approval from the Dean of Faculty, undergraduate students may work with remote supervision from lecturing staff, demonstrating or technical staff that are in close proximity to the area. This is on the condition that occasional checks take place; occasional checks should be proportionate to the risks associated with the activity and be based around the risk assessment findings. As such, no specific frequency can be given in relation to the time that should pass between checks however, it is recommended that a maximum of no more than 30 minutes between checks being undertaken. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the person responsible for co-ordinating safety within the school and or by contacting the Health and Safety Team (HSDEmails@wlv.ac.uk).

Category C: (This includes laboratories, workshops, and studios, etc. containing higher risk mechanical or electrical equipment, or higher risk science equipment or chemicals.)

Research students may work with remote supervision from lecturing staff (supplemented by technical staff) in close proximity or in the company of at least one other postgraduate student if they have written approval from the Dean of Faculty.

Undergraduate students must not work in a Category C area in the absence of direct supervision from lecturing, demonstrating or technical staff.

Category D: No student may work without a supervisor present in the room.

Deans are required to designate all laboratories, workshops, and studios, etc. used by their Faculties as Category A, B, C or D and post notices indicating the level of supervision necessary, so that it is possible for any appropriate member of staff to check whether a student is working within the agreed conditions. It is recommended that the notice be approximately A5 in size and placed on the door to the room. See **Appendix A** for example signage.

In cases, where the room category may be subject to change dependent upon the activity taking place, a notice should be displayed clarifying this and specifying the relevant circumstances/times when this applies. If it is felt necessary, a notice explaining to students the rules for complying with the relevant safety category can also be placed on a notice board inside the room.

In addition it is also advised to record the maximum capacity to aid in checking that established safe capacities are not being exceeded. Advice regarding the maximum capacity of any room within the University can be sought from Estates and Facilities and/or the University Health and Safety Team.

Project Work for Special Consideration

Exceptionally, for part of a research programme of work where all the procedures to be carried out in a specific period of up to one week consist of work with low risk equipment or materials such as may normally be found in Category B teaching rooms, a research student may work alone in a Category C room provided he/she has a certificate in the following format, signed by the Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty:

*"I certify that (student name and number) is a research student in the Faculty of...On (date/s - not exceeding 1 week)
They will be working on procedures which are of low risk and has permission to work alone in teaching room...
(Category C)."*

In Faculties where research student's work on individual projects which require use of dangerous equipment or materials, a specific risk assessment should be carried out for the work involved. This will include an investigation of the hazards involved, the quantities of substances used, the facilities available and the degree of supervision needed for each activity. The supervisor must ensure that the student has read and understood the assessment and accepted the need to conform to it.

Typical considerations include:

- The identification of any machinery and processes/activities which are considered hazardous/dangerous.
- Any activity covered by relevant legislation e.g., the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002, etc.
- Any protective clothing and/or equipment that may be required; and
- Any safe systems of work relevant to the activities undertaken in the project

(Further guidance and support can be located here: [Health and Safety - University of Wolverhampton \(wlv.ac.uk\)](http://wlv.ac.uk/HealthandSafety)).

When considering whether aspects of a project undertaken within core hours of the Faculty can be

undertaken without supervision, the member of staff who is in charge of the project work must ensure that the following requirements are implemented before supervision is removed:

- Ensure that all students are familiar with the emergency evacuation procedure as well as the local arrangements for first aid.
- Take into account that some work processes, such as lifting heavy weights or hand-operated machinery can inflict serious injury and due regard must be taken of this when deciding whether students should operate unsupervised.
- Consider whether or not the project presents a special risk to an unsupervised student.
- Consider any plant, equipment or substance that may require more than one person in order for it to be handled safely i.e., the lifting of objects too large or heavy for one person or the operating of essential controls for the safe running of equipment, etc.
- Consider the student's capabilities and any declared medical conditions or other circumstances which may make it unsuitable for him/her to work unsupervised

These (3.3) are the minimum requirements only, and any additional requirements that have been identified by a suitable and sufficient risk assessment should be put in place by the faculty.

All activities must be compliant with HM Government Guidance or restrictions relating to ongoing Public Health.

5. Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Dean of Faculty to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place with regard to the supervision of students, which includes the designation of times during which facilities are available.

6. Exceptions

There are no exceptions to this policy.

Failure to adhere to the terms of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

7. Amendments

The University may change this Policy at any time, and where appropriate. Where a policy is not due for review, but is found to require updating, it will remain published, unless the reasons for review render it obsolete.

8. Key Contacts

For general queries, please contact the University Health and Safety Team. Email: HSDEmails@wlv.ac.uk/ and/or Estates and Facilities, where necessary [Estates and Facilities - University of Wolverhampton \(wlv.ac.uk\)](#).

9. Contact

For general Policy queries please contact the University Corporate Compliance Team via email: compliance@wlv.ac.uk.

VERSION	V7	AUTHOR(S)	Head of Health and Safety
		OWNER	
Approved Date	June 2026	Approved By	University Health and Safety Committee- 8th June 2026 and University Executive Board-8th September 2026
Next Review Date	June 2029		

Appendix A: Example Room Categorisation Signage

ROOM MZ307
SAFETY CATEGORY:
A
Students may work unsupervised
Maximum no. of occupants permitted: ___

ROOM MZ207
SAFETY CATEGORY:
C
Supervision required
Maximum no. of occupants permitted: ___