



**UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH**



**Middlesex
University
London**

University Research Proposal

In Partnership with

IOSH London Metropolitan Branch



1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide the rationale and proposal for a research partnership between Middlesex University, University of Greenwich and IOSH London Metropolitan Branch. In addition this proposal requests support of this proposal in principle from IOSH from a non-financial perspective.

Middlesex University London and the University of Greenwich currently offer various awards at both undergraduate and postgraduate level in the areas of Occupational Safety & Health, Risk and Environmental Health. In addition, aligned awards are also provided where health and safety is taught to augment and support considerations of health and safety within a business, design, engineering, architecture and HR context.

Forging stronger links with industry and practice are key priorities for both Middlesex and Greenwich Universities to increase the impact of education and research through informing professional practice.

To this end, this proposal outlines a process of engagement and partnership with IOSH London Metropolitan Branch to enhance the ability for all parties to strengthen leadership and social responsibility in responding to societal research needs and influencing change through building an evidence base of research from health and safety practice.

2.0 Mission & Guiding Principles

Middlesex University London, the University of Greenwich and IOSH London Metropolitan Branch (and members) are key health and safety stakeholders in London. One of the common goals between these stakeholders is the empowerment of students of occupational safety and health with research and practice skills; and the building of a strong evidence base of research to demonstrate leadership and further inform the practice of occupational safety and health.

The proposed partnership between these key London universities and IOSH London Metropolitan Branch is based on existing aligned strategic objectives of all parties. In cognisance of this, this proposal aligns with the strategies of the University institutions, the corporate strategy of IOSH, and the local strategy of the IOSH London Metropolitan Branch.

Guiding values and principles governing this partnership relate to demonstrating strong leadership in the field of health and safety in the London region; committing to excellence in research in meeting the strategic research needs of IOSH and IOSH members; and empowering successful engagement between the often separate areas of health and safety practice and research.

3.0 Strategic Aim & Objectives

The aim of this research partnership is to facilitate and develop a collaborative network of researchers and practitioners within the IOSH London Metropolitan Branch region.

Key objectives of this partnership are to:

- Identify and contribute to research themes pertinent to IOSH and IOSH members such as wellbeing and global considerations of occupational safety and health on an ongoing basis.
- Engage and empower IOSH members through research and education in relation to occupational safety and health.
- Generate new evidence from research to support occupational safety and health.
- Increase the use of research as a means of improving the practice of occupational safety and health through evidence based decision making in practice and informing of public policy.
- Facilitate the use of innovative and peer reviewed applied research methods thereby deriving independent, valid and representative results from which all stakeholders benefit.

Success will be measured by the levels of engagement identified between IOSH branch members and researchers; the number of published research outputs and the extent that research outputs are used to inform practice or influence policy both locally and nationally.

4.0 Current Position

The proposal has been developed in response to existing strengths and opportunities identified from both a strategic perspective and also by taking into account the current external environment in which this proposal shall operate.

4.1 Aligned Strategic Objectives

In evaluating the existing strategies of both the universities and IOSH, common objectives were identified. These include demonstrating active and inspirational leadership; responding to society in a socially responsible manner and with an outward focus; supporting members of society through demonstrating excellence in what we do including research; in addition to facilitating and growing global reach.

With this in mind, it is seen to be mutually beneficial to work in partnership to achieve these common objectives in benefiting society and in particular IOSH members and future practitioners in our universities and across our networks.

4.2 Building Competence and Capability through Collaboration, Research and Practice

Academic provision seeks to provide not only the cognitive development of concepts and theories, but also the skills required to successfully undertake a role in professional practice in a competent manner.

The proposal seeks to address student employability through balancing student learning with practical research skills that positively contribute to professional practice.

Practitioner collaboration and engagement with research promotes a deeper understanding of the status of occupational safety and health, and provides evidence from which to base future decision making and management strategies for occupational safety and health.

The generation of research outputs using evidence based approaches with practitioners will increase the capability for IOSH to further inform public policy.

4.3 Financial Independence and Increasing Impact

Independence and transparency in developing the evidence base are key characteristics of this proposal. This will ensure greater validity of research outputs and in turn, greater potential to inform practice and influence policy at various levels of society.

There can be a risk of criticisms relating to the lack of distance between professional groups and research outputs which can result in potential conflicts of interest. Independence and scrutiny provided by all partners will significantly help to reduce this risk.

Critical elements of the proposal include transparency; independence from funding grants; and direct engagement of practice to identify research that will provide greater impact.

5.0 Proposed Partnership

The development of this partnership requires liaison, consultation and agreement between all parties to ensure the aim and objectives are achieved.

It is proposed that the IOSH London Metropolitan Branch will provide a platform for collaboration between participating universities and IOSH members for research purposes.

It is proposed that IOSH London Metropolitan Branch shall:

- Annually agree a research agenda which is aligned with broader IOSH strategies in addition to any specific branch member requirements.
- Carry out initial marketing and facilitation with branch members in liaison with the participating Universities.
- Agree and communicate research meeting dates to IOSH members through website and available media.
- Provide an award for best student research project in line with current branch objectives.
- Facilitate communication and dissemination of research findings both internally and externally.
- Use evidence from research to demonstrate leadership in influencing policy and practice at local and national level. This will be in consideration of IOSH current publication strategies where necessary in preparation of policy submissions, IOSH guidance publications etc.

It is proposed that the participating London Universities shall:

- Annually update the research agenda based on IOSH agreement and also branch members requirements.
- Plan, facilitate and run research meetings for IOSH branch members to provide member awareness of the process and opportunities for research, in addition to research outputs in the future.
- Co-ordinate, manage and complete research between research students, research staff and IOSH branch members with associated peer reviewed publication where possible (academic journals, SHP articles and equivalents).
- Prepare research output summaries for online posting and communication by IOSH branch (1-page overviews similar to EU environmental research summaries– see examples - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/themes_menu.htm)
- Evaluate the partnership research strategy annually against partnership aim and objectives in liaison with IOSH and the local Branch.

6.0 Initial Kick-off

An initial 18 month pilot is proposed that will consider the branch liaison and agreement efficacy; identification of emerging research themes; carry out initial research; and evaluate the process overall. Thereafter a decision will be made as to any required adjustments to the strategy before rolling out the proposed process on a longer term basis.

Where this proposal is agreed, research partnership planning will be undertaken to fully decide on all elements of the research process. This will include consulting with IOSH on the broad research themes for consideration. It will be pertinent at this time to be cognisant of the political, economic, social, technical, legal and environmental (PESTLE) influences on health and safety both internally to IOSH (from research agendas) and externally in order to guide strategic decision-making on these research themes with a view to influencing policy and increasing impact.

The nature and size of projects will be decided on the basis of researcher and tutor timelines and capabilities; and research quality control processes will be agreed.

It is proposed that the initial pilot will be carried out with MSc student researchers on projects with the potential for industry or management support for practitioner led research.

An initial presentation with IOSH branch members shall be undertaken to initially engage members with the agreed process and possibilities for research. From this initial engagement, a workshop will be held in early September 2014 to confirm research themes and identify potential projects with branch members.

Appropriate research projects will be designed and agreed where appropriate to MSc students as part of their academic programmes. It is hoped that where possible, elements of these research projects will open up some placement opportunities for students to collect data and gain in-house experience of health and safety practice.

On completion of pilot research projects, the process will be evaluated to determine successes and identify any problems for resolution.

The following timeline is proposed to undertake the pilot.

Month	Activity
May 14	Partnership Proposal sent to IOSH
June 14	Start consultation with IOSH London Met branch on research themes
July 14	Presentation to IOSH branch members
August 14	Prepare for workshop and agree details with IOSH London Met branch.
September 14	Workshop to confirm research themes and identify project areas
October 14	Identify appropriate research, students and assign research projects
January 15	Initial status report on research project design and progress
July 15	Progress Report: Status of research report & findings
October 15	Research Project Completion: Report and Review of Outputs
November 15	Pilot Research Programme Evaluation
December 15	Final Report of Pilot Evaluation & Preparation of Research Output Summaries

7.0 Long Term Considerations

Based on the evaluation of the pilot, it is proposed that more long term processes can be considered to ensure the ongoing viability of the partnership.

Issues to consider will include annual reviews of strategic research agendas; periodic reviews of research outputs and contribution to policy and practice and management of the research undertaken.

Ongoing resourcing by Universities; management of processes and outputs; and evaluations will be considered on an ongoing basis through regular consultation and communications with IOSH.

8.0 Resources for Proposal

It is proposed that research personnel will consist initially of academic staff, students and PhD/DProf researchers. In addition IOSH members will also be supported in carrying out research following the initial consultation where requested.

No additional financial resources are required at this stage. Some academic research funding is provided for student work undertaken on a limited basis by universities and further funding for larger projects may be realised in the future as the process develops. Where publication of research is sought, there are costs associated with this which will be considered in the future as this case arises.

8.1 Contacts

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