General FAQs

**What is an audit system and what does it aim to achieve?**

An audit system is a way of looking at how effective we are in managing our health and safety risks. By considering a representative sample of activities, it systematically checks how a whole school or service unit manages either its whole range of health and safety risks, or just one specific topic in detail. It aims to give valuable information that highlights strengths as well as areas of greatest risk to enable local and central resources to be focused on these areas.

**Why is my area being audited?**

The University must be sure that every college, service unit and school is implementing health and safety procedures effectively to create a safe and healthy workplace. The best way to do this is through a system of checks and balances that lets each area know how effective their management systems are. The audit helps us all to identify objectively our strengths (areas of best practice to share with others) and areas for improvement (where local resources should be focused and more central support, training and information may be needed).

**What happens – can you give me a quick overview?**

1. The audit begins with a pre- audit meeting led by the Auditors to agree the process, timescales and scope with the Head of School/ Service and Safety Coordinator.
2. The school/ service then has approximately 4 weeks to prepare for the audit itself which starts with a meeting to confirm the process details.
3. Over the next few weeks, identified staff will be asked to answer questions and bring documents as written evidence to the audit team.
4. The school/ service then receive a draft report setting out key findings - which you can discuss and respond to.
5. A final report will be sent to the auditee who must develop a corrective action plan and in conjunction with the local Safety committee agree an implementation plan to deal with any issues raised.

**What does the auditor do?**

The audit is usually undertaken by a small team of auditors from SEPS who plan the audit, produce a methodology to discuss and agree with Heads of School/ Institute/ Service and also arrange and lead on the opening and closing meetings.

They will request information, interview people, observe areas and work activities and make informed judgements based on the evidence provided produce a full, detailed report and summary overview outlining how and where expected legal University standards have been achieved and best practice can be shared or where improvements still need to be made.

They will agree the action plan and timescales with the Head of School/ Service and Safety Coordinator and sign off the actions once completed.

FAQs for Heads of School/ Service

**I’m a Head of School/ Service, what do I need to do?**

You should approve the audit methodology in consultation with the audit team, be available for interview, provide any necessary documents and attend the opening and closing meetings.

* You should let staff know that the audit will occur and that they may be interviewed.
* You should also identify key staff who should be involved.
* After the audit you should feedback on and formally accept the final report, share the findings with staff and develop an action plan with your team. You should agree this with the Lead Auditor and address the recommendations until all actions are signed off and completed.
* Keep a record of the audit report and action plan until the next audit occurs, or until all the actions have been completed and signed off, or for at least three years - whichever is the longest.

**How will the audit help my school/ service?**

The audit aims to:

* Give valuable information to each school/ service by highlighting strengths and examples of good practice or innovative solutions.
* Identify the areas of greatest risk in each school/ service, to enable local and central resources to be focused on these areas.
* Be flexible and objective (but not bureaucratic) in its approach. The audit provides a simple bar chart overview that shows the school/ service’s performance against the audit question set, supported by a detailed explanatory report that can be fine-tuned to satisfy your needs.
* Help SEPS to help you by prioritising the topics on which you need more guidance, and listening to any issues you have to see how we can continuously improve the service we offer you.

**Who keeps records?**

Both the Head of the area being audited (often the Head of School/ Service) and the auditor must keep copies of the audit report and action plan until all actions have been signed off. (SEPS will retain a file copy until the next audit).

**How long will the audit take?**

That depends on the size of the school or service and can take between 1 to 2 days. The verification process tends to extend the duration of the audit.

**When will it happen?**

SEPS will notify the Head of School/ Service within a reasonable time before the audit. However if an external agency intervenes, or there are other internal concerns, we may change the timetable to bring forward priority areas.

**What if the audit is due to take place when my school/ service is too busy?**

SEPS take a flexible approach and understand the pressures on staff, but all areas must receive an audit over the next 3 years. If an audit is scheduled at an unsuitable time the Head of School/ Service should discuss this with the Head of SEPS to determine if an alternative date can be arranged.

**What happens after the audit?**

SEPS will ask the Head of School/ Service (supported by the Safety Coordinator) to prepare a response to the report, and discuss it with them before making a final decision. SEPS will often offer assistance to the Head of School/ Service to develop an action plan and share the report findings with staff.

**What support do I get?**

The Lead Auditor will support you through the process. If you have further questions you can contact SEPS on 5532 by email on safety@glasgow.co.uk

Staff FAQs

**What do staff do during the audit?**

Staff simply need to answer any questions as fully as possible and find any documents or records needed to provide evidence of those answers. You may need to show the audit team around the area and if asked by the Head of School/ Service to attend the closing or opening meeting, you should do so.

**Who will be asked to attend an interview and what will they be asked?**

Staff are selected for interview either randomly from the staff list or asked specifically because it is thought that they may have useful information to share. If you are selected, you will be asked questions about your role in relation to health and safety - the key thing to remember is that there is no right or wrong answer. The aim is to give the auditor a true picture of the current situation to see how well the systems work, it is not to apportion blame or name individuals.

**Who gets the results?**

The Head of School/ Service and any other party that has been agreed will receive a performance summary and full report as well as the HSW Committee.