

## Safe use of Lasers

This bulletin should be brought to the attention academic supervisors and principal investigators responsible for projects using lasers.

Action should be taken in accordance with the University's [Laser Policy Roles and Responsibilities](#).

### Updated AURPO Guidance

The Association of University Radiation Protection Officers (AURPO) has updated its [Guidance on the Safe Use of Lasers in Education and Research](#). A link to the guidance is available from the [Laser Safety](#) pages of the University's website.

This revision, which replaces the 2012 version, has been produced following a review of the current BS EN standards and changes to statutory requirements.

Note that the foreword states:

*In the past, work with open beams was common place but now there is a shift in emphasis away from old cultures and practices; there is a strong emphasis on enclosing the optical hazard and thus avoiding the need for protective eyewear and door interlocks. Open beam work should now be the exception and only after a robust justification has been made that it is not reasonably practicable to enclose the beam.*

### HSE Inspections

We have been made aware that the Health and Safety Executive are carrying out a programme of inspections of University laser facilities. Areas they have picked up at other universities are:

- Use of open beam lasers: HSE expectation is that use of open beam lasers shouldn't be happening unless the written risk assessment demonstrates robust justifications and measures to reduce risk of exposure to the beam (e.g. by lowering the power as far as practicable during adjustments).
- Risk assessments must be updated when there are changes made to an experiment.

### What you need to do

The responsible person<sup>1</sup> will need to:

- Review the AURPO [Guidance on the Safe Use of Lasers in Education and Research](#) to determine whether any changes to existing local rules and laser safety practice are required.
- Ensure that their risk assessments are suitable and sufficient, taking account of the AUPRO guidance on hazard and risk assessment.
- Ensure that risk assessments are being updated when changes are being made to experiments.

<sup>1</sup> see [Laser Policy Roles and Responsibilities](#)