

## PERSONNEL SERVICES

University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD  
Director of Human Resources



To: all heads of department and institutions, faculty board chairs,  
departmental administrators, and faculty board secretaries

Ref.EMS/5

cc: heads of division and divisional registrars, Director of the  
Conference of Colleges Secretariat, Mr Goffin, Mr Tideswell.

4 January 2019

### Revisions to the No Smoking Policy, to include vaping

Since March 2006, the University's [No Smoking Policy](#) has prohibited all forms of smoking in all University-owned buildings and vehicles. In recent years, electronic cigarettes have become more widely used and Council has therefore approved an updated No Smoking Policy which addresses the issue of the use of electronic cigarettes or similar devices (vaping).

#### 1. Action required of departments

- to note this change of policy and to update any local policies and procedures, as appropriate;
- to distribute the policy and update, if appropriate, any prohibition signs; and
- where 'designated areas' are provided for smokers, to note that those wishing to vape must not be required to share these spaces.

#### 2. Background

The Health Act 2006's provisions regarding smoke-free premises, places and vehicles led to the University's [No Smoking Policy](#), which was introduced in July 2007. The policy prohibits smoking in all University-owned buildings and vehicles. In recent years, electronic cigarettes have become more widely used. The use of electronic cigarettes is not covered by smoke-free legislation and employers may set their own rules about the use of electronic cigarettes.

Council has considered the issue and approved a revised policy which now specifically prohibits the use of electronic cigarettes, or similar devices, in all the same locations and areas as are covered by the no-smoking rules. Some minor amendments to the policy have also been made to reflect Estates Services long-term lettings policies.

Current evidence<sup>1</sup> suggests that the health risk effects both to electronic cigarette users and from secondary exposure is much lower than from tobacco smoke. It is also recognised that using

<sup>1</sup> Public Health England "[Evidence review of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products](#)", McNeill A, Brose LS, Calder R, Bauld L & Robson D (2018)



electronic cigarettes can contribute to smoking cessation, and can have a positive effect on smoker health.

However, as yet, there is no evidence that electronic cigarette use is without any risk of harm to bystanders, and electronic cigarette use can produce aerosols and nuisance odours in enclosed workplaces. Those with asthma and other respiratory conditions may be particularly sensitive to 'environmental irritants' which could include electronic cigarette vapour<sup>1</sup>. Public Health England also note that individual organisations may consider that "reasons other than the health risk to bystanders may exist for prohibiting e-cigarette use in all or part of a public place or workplace, such as commercial considerations and professional etiquette".

Most workplaces and enclosed public spaces (including public transport systems) have chosen to extend their no smoking provisions to prohibit vaping. Consultation indicated that where University departments have a local policy they have already extended the smoking ban to include vaping. Consultation with the Trades Unions showed that that such an approach is in line with Unison guidance.

Public Health England advises that those who wish to use electronic cigarettes, or other similar devices, must not be expected to use the same space as smokers. Where departments provide 'designated areas' for smokers, those wishing to vape must not be required to share these spaces.

The revised policy, reflecting the changes described above, is provided at Annexe A.

### **Further information**

For further information, please contact Sarah Thonemann ([sarah.thonemann@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.thonemann@admin.ox.ac.uk)) or Kate Butler ([kate.butler@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:kate.butler@admin.ox.ac.uk)).

Mr Julian Duxfield

Replaces existing circular: PERS(07)06  
Copy for noticeboards: Yes

<sup>1</sup> Public Health England: "[Use of e-cigarettes in public places and workplaces](#)" July 2016