

Section 16 - Policy on Firearms, Imitation Firearms and Offensive Weapons on Campus

Policy Statement

The University of Bolton acknowledges that it has a duty of care to ensure a safe and welcoming campus for staff, students and visitors and as such it has imposed strict controls on the ownership, possession, and potential use of firearms, imitation firearms and / or offensive weapons on University premises.

The University has agreed that the possession, carrying or use of:

- Defined in the Prevention of Crime Act 1953, Section 1, as any article made or adapted for use for the purpose of causing injury to the person; or intended by the person having it for such use by them or some other person.
- Including all premises located in Bolton and any other location in the United Kingdom owned or leased by University of Bolton which is used for University business.
- Defined as a purpose commensurate with legitimate University teaching, learning, research and business use and / or with the stated terms of reference of a Bolton Students' Union society

All firearms, imitation firearms, and / or any offensive weapons are banned from all University of Bolton premises, with the exception of firearms, imitation firearms and / or offensive weapons being used for legitimate purposes and authorised by the University in advance.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the University's staff and students comply with:

1. The firearms and imitation firearms ban on its premises, and unless legitimately held,
2. The offensive weapons ban on its premises.

Offensive weapons, for the purpose of this Policy, are as defined in the Prevention of Crime Act 1953, Section 1, where there is intent to cause injury or cause alarm to another individual.

Any infringement of the ban, (which means any unauthorised possession, carrying or use outside that authorised in accordance with below) will be treated seriously by the University and may be considered under relevant disciplinary procedures.

Any emergency incident involving a firearm, imitation firearm and / or offensive weapon on University premises will be dealt with in accordance with the University's emergency management procedures which includes reporting the incident to Greater Manchester Police, and may have serious consequences for the individuals concerned.

Definitions

For the purpose of this document, the following definitions apply:

- A weapon - any object which is designed for the purpose of inflicting bodily harm. Weapons that are prohibited by law e.g. sawn-off shotguns, machine guns, submachine guns must not be used under any circumstances. Anyone found in possession of such weapons must be reported to the police;

- Firearm(s) - weapons which are controlled by the Firearms Acts and those that discharge explosive gases (blanks), pellets by compressed gasses (air pistols/rifles), starting pistols, or any form of projectile including shotgun pellets, bullets, musket balls;
- Other weapons - crossbows, catapults, sharp-edged instruments used in a fight sequence (swords and knives) or martial arts weapons (such as rice flails) and police batons, battering rams;
- Replica weapon - a prop designed to look like a weapon which, depending upon the material of construction, may or may not be capable of inflicting bodily harm;
- Deactivated weapon - one in which the mechanisms to cause harm have been removed or permanently disabled and has been certified as deactivated by a proof house - see Home Office guidance Firearms Law: Guidance to the police, listed in 'Further reading';
- Weapons expert or competent person - someone who has the necessary knowledge, experience and training to advise on the use of the weapon. These may include armourers, sword masters, fight arrangers or martial arts experts.

General

No weapon, deactivated weapon or replica must be brought onto campus unless prior permission has been given. Such permission must only be given if the weapon is an essential part of a filming/photography project.

If it is considered absolutely necessary to use any type of weapon, as defined in the definition above, then a proposal must be discussed with the appropriate lecturer, who, in conjunction with the Security / Facilities, must give their authority before any weapon is brought onto campus. Such authority must only be given if Security/ Facilities are satisfied that such an item is essential for the project being undertaken and the necessary precautions can be taken.

Once authority has been given, the weapon must only be used for the purpose declared and not misused in any way.

The person responsible for the weapon, and any associated equipment, must be competent in its use and where applicable its storage, necessary security arrangements and safety features.

Where authority has been given for the use of a weapon the Security Department & Facilities Director must be informed of the following:

- Make/model of weapon;
- Serial number (if applicable);
- Where the item will be used;
- How long the period of use will be;
- Where the item will be kept when not in use;
- Name and contact details of the person responsible for the item;
- License details (where appropriate);
- The time use of the weapon has ceased/removed from campus;
- Any other information deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Once authority has been given, the weapon must only be used for the purpose declared and not misused in any way.

Use of a weapon

Careful consideration must be given to safer alternatives prior to authorising the use of weapons on site. Where there is an absolute need to use a firearm that has been deactivated, the certificate of deactivation must be produced before the weapon may be used in the project. The course lecturer authorising use of the weapon must verify the certificate applies to the weapon in question.

The Director of Facilities and/or Security Department will:-

- Acknowledge receipt of a request to bring a weapon on site;
- Ensure that an appropriate risk assessment has been carried out on the proposed activity and a copy of the assessment is included with the request.
- Share the risk assessment document with the University's Group Health and Safety Manager.
- Undertake an initial assessment of the request, in conjunction with the Group Health and Safety Manager, including checking all documentation supplied and any other policies / procedures deemed relevant to the application.

Any weapon capable of discharging a projectile, or capable of firing blanks, must not be used in a public or built-up area. If necessary, optic techniques such as cutaways or camera angles must be used to ensure safe distances can be maintained.

Such weapons (even those capable of firing blanks) must not be loaded and any ammunition used as part of the filming sequence must be kept secure and accounted for at all times. Any ammunition found to be missing, must be reported to the campus security immediately.

All weapons and the circumstances where it will be used, must be under the control of a competent person. In addition, there must be:

- a full written risk assessment completed*;
 - rehearsal of the action where necessary;
 - training in the use of the weapons for those involved and information on the dangers of such weapons must be provided;
 - The weapon should never be left unattended and must have a means of securing safely whilst on site.
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- Information and guidance to assist with the risk assessment must be obtained from relevant advisory bodies e.g. Joint Advisory Committee for Broadcasting and the Performing Arts, Health and Safety Executive.

If personal protective equipment is to be used, it must be suitable for the weapon and circumstances concerned.

The person responsible for the weapon must be the legal owner, or else have written authorisation from the legal owner. If loaned, the person responsible must be legally entitled to take possession of the weapon concerned and all persons who will use the weapon must be legally entitled to do so.

When not in use, the weapon must be kept secure to prevent accidental and/or unauthorised use or theft. Where necessary, for example deactivated weapons and replicas, must be locked in a secure case and stored in a locked room with restricted access. The weapon cannot be left unattended without adequate security measures at any time.

All sequences where the weapon is to be used must be co-ordinated and choreographed safely and all persons involved fully aware of the arrangements. Good communication must be maintained throughout the sequences.

Any person not directly involved with sequences where a weapon is being used (including rehearsals) must be kept well clear of the area concerned. Consideration must also be given to the positioning of camera operators.

Transportation of any weapon must comply with best practice requirements. The weapon must be securely stored and not visible to others during transit.

Monitor and Review

All Department, managers and staff are responsible for monitoring the ongoing suitability and validity of this guidance and drawing attention to any circumstances that arise which may not be covered by this guidance.

This guidance will be subject to audit and the findings reporting to the Board of Governors via the Executive Committee and the University Health and Safety Committee.

This guidance will be formally reviewed by the Local & Main Health and Safety Committees at 2 yearly intervals or as soon as possible if there is reason to believe it no longer remains valid.