Visit to UK Universities (2016)

To learn about the UK manpower model in safety & health and best practices, Mr Saravanan Gunaratnam and Dr Lim Cheh Peng visited four UK universities, namely University of Bristol, University of Cambridge, University of Oxford and University of Brighton from 14 – 18 Nov 2016. The OSHE team was warmly welcomed by the respective university representatives and was introduced to the various aspects of their safety & health management framework. The visits ranged in different topics, including introduction to the organisation’s manpower model and oversight framework in safety & health, bespoke audit programme, overview of occupational health system/services, biosafety, chemical safety, overseas travel and fieldwork.

The OSHE team also learnt best practices through laboratory and facility tours conducted by the hosts. Some of the highlights are showcased below.

1. University of Bristol:
   a. Display of traffic light colour-coded system for restriction of access (based on hazards) at the door of each facility.
   b. A small door panel to glass window on the door of rooms with regulated temperature e.g. plant rooms, which can be opened to check whether anyone is conducting work in the room before entering.
   c. Decontamination of condensate from incubators housing genetically modified plants before the condensate is discharged into the sewer.

2. University of Cambridge:
   a. Rack of personalized eye glasses for lab members and visitors at the entrance of the labs.
   b. Automated fire extinguishers integrated inside the fume hoods (chemistry laboratories).
   c. Fire-rated cupboards for housing gas cylinders.

3. University of Oxford:
   a. The Principal Investigator, Professor Christopher Tang from Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, has written a safety manual specific for his laboratory that handles Shigella, and personally assesses the competency of his new staff / students.

4. University of Brighton:
   a. Announcement / dissemination of safety & health matters using QR code, e.g. on notice boards, flyers, etc., for easy access to information.
   b. Emergency telephones located in all floors of the building where staff/students can receive or make a call during emergencies, e.g. in times of refuge.
   c. Keys to freezers & cabinets which contain regulated materials are locked in a combination lock key cabinet as a secondary access control to authorized personnel only.
   d. High-density cage with direct exhaust ventilation technology for housing rodents, where cages are easily accessible by rotating the carousel.
Figure 1. Welcome by University of Bristol. From L-R: Grace Mashingaidze (Senior Occupational Health Advisor), Jason Parr (Acting Director of Health and Safety), Dr Simon Golding (University Biosafety Officer & Safety Advisor) and Mr Saravanan Gunaratnam.

Figure 2. Mr Saravanan Gunaratnam with Dr Simon Golding (University Biosafety Officer and Safety Advisor) and Mr Jason Parr (Acting Director of Health and Safety) on a tour conducted by Anthony (extreme right) at the University of Bristol’s Life Science Building.

Figure 3. Introduction to University of Cambridge by Dr Martin Vinnell (Director of Health, Safety and Regulated Facilities) and Mr John S. Hulme (Chemical and Physical Safety Advisor) over coffee. From L-R: Dr Martin Vinnell, Mr John S. Hulme and Mr Saravanan Gunaratnam.

Figure 4. Introduction to ChemInvent by Daniel Fitzpatrick. From L-R: Mr Daniel Fitzpatrick, Mr John S. Hulme Mr Richard Turner, Mr Saravanan Gunaratnam and Dr Lim Cheh Peng.

Figure 5. Sharing of safety & health programmes by University of Oxford. From L-R: Mr Saravanan Gunaratnam, Ms Tanya Boyce (Assistant University Safety Officer), Mr Brian Jenkins (University Safety Officer) and Mr Andrew Thompson (University Biological Safety Officer).

Figure 6. BSL2 laboratory tour by Professor Christoph Tan, University of Oxford. From L-R: Mr Andrew Thompson (University Biological Safety Officer), Professor Christoph Tan and Mr Saravanan Gunaratnam.
Figure 7. Laboratory tour hosted by Professor Paul Gard, Deputy Head of School (Compliance), University of Brighton. From L-R: Ms Nicky Arnold, Professor Paul Gard, Dr Lim Cheh Peng and Mr Andrew Knight.

Figure 8. Ms Nicky Arnold, Safety HUB Manager, University of Brighton, showing Dr Lim Cheh Peng their newly revamped and enhanced bulletin board. Each piece of safety and health news is presented with a QR code to enable quick and easy access to safety and health information.

Figure 9. Tokens of appreciation were presented to Alan Cowen (Director of Health and Safety) and Andrew Knight (Deputy Director of Health and Safety). From L-R: Mr Alan Cowen, Mr Andrew Knight and Mr Saravanan Gunaratnam.