

Use of Weapons for Theatrical, Artistic and Research Purposes			
Policy ✓	Code of Practice...	Guidance...	Procedure...
Organisation-wide ✓		Local...	
Approved by the University Health & Safety Committee			
Chairperson: Dr. Manuel Alonso	Review Date: October 2025	Next review date: October 2028	
The purpose of presenting this document to the University Health & Safety Committee			
Standard 3 year review✓ Changes in practice and/or legislation... New policy document...			

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Legal Context	2
3. Responsibilities and Governance	2
4. Authorisation and Notification	3
5. Risk Assessment and Safety Measures	3
6. Transport, Storage, and Use	3
7. Incident Reporting and RIDDOR	3
8. Community and Social Activity on Campus	3
9. Review and Audit	3

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the University's arrangements for the safe, lawful, and responsible use of weapons for theatrical, artistic, and research purposes. It applies to all University colleges, departments, staff, students, contractors, and visiting practitioners engaged in performances, exhibitions, or research activities involving firearms, bladed articles, or other controlled weapons. The University recognises that while creative expression is important, public safety and legal compliance always take precedence.

2. Legal Context

All activities must comply with the following UK legislation and statutory instruments:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Firearms Act 1968 (as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017)
- Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (Sections 36–38 – Realistic Imitation Firearms)
- Offensive Weapons Act 2019 (bladed articles, corrosives, rapid-firing rifles)
- Explosives Regulations 2014 (storage and use of pyrotechnics or blank ammunition)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 2022
- Equality Act 2010
- HSE Entertainment Information Sheet 20 (rev1, 2022): Management of Firearms and Weapons in Film and TV Productions

3. Responsibilities and Governance

3.1 The Weapons and Firearms Awareness Group (WAFAG) is responsible for overseeing all University activities involving weapons or firearms. WAFAG will review and authorise project risk assessments, ensure police notification, and maintain records of all approved uses.

3.2 Each College or Department must designate a Responsible Person to liaise with WAFAG and the Health, Safety & Environment Team (HSET). The Responsible Person ensures compliance with this policy and maintains a register of weapons used for teaching or performance.

3.3 WAFAG shall undertake an annual audit of all projects involving weapons and report findings to the University Health & Safety Committee.

4. Authorisation and Notification

No activity involving weapons shall take place without written authorisation from WAFAG and completion of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. Any use of firearms (including imitation, blank-firing, or deactivated weapons) must have lawful authority, and police notification must be made at least four weeks prior to use. Copies of correspondence and approvals must be retained by the department for audit purposes.

5. Risk Assessment and Safety Measures

All projects involving weapons must complete a risk assessment that considers physical, legal, and psychological risks. Risk assessments shall be reviewed after any significant change, incident, or near miss. Supervision must be provided by a competent person such as a qualified armourer or accredited fight director.

Risk assessments must include consideration of psychological or emotional impacts, particularly where simulated violence or trauma may affect participants. Reasonable adjustments must be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Where pyrotechnics or blank ammunition are used, compliance with the Explosives Regulations 2014 and HSG123 is required. Only authorised persons may handle such materials, and secure storage must be provided.

6. Transport, Storage, and Use

Weapons, replicas, and related equipment must be stored securely when not in use. Transport must follow the conditions outlined in the Firearms Act 1968 and associated Home Office Guidance (2023). Bladed weapons and corrosive substances must be managed in accordance with the Offensive Weapons Act 2019. Props should be clearly marked as replicas and kept out of public view when transported to prevent alarm.

7. Incident Reporting and RIDDOR

Any incident involving injury, discharge, or near miss with a weapon or pyrotechnic device must be reported immediately to the Health, Safety & Environment Team. Incidents that meet the criteria under RIDDOR Regulation 11 (dangerous occurrences) must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive within the statutory timescale.

8. Community and Social Activity on Campus

Brunel University of London maintains a zero-tolerance policy for the unauthorised possession or display of weapons on university premises. This includes imitation weapons used for social media content or unofficial projects. Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

9. Review and Audit

This policy will be reviewed every three years or following any change in legislation, incident, or audit finding. The review will be led by the Health, Safety & Environment Team in consultation with WAFAG and relevant College Safety Coordinators.

