Harper Adams University

SAFE USE AND STORAGE OF FIREARMS AT HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

DECEMBER 2024

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1. Policy Statement

Harper Adams University (HAU / the University) is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its students, staff, and visitors. To maintain a secure campus environment, the possession, use, or storage of firearms, imitation firearms, or offensive weapons is strictly prohibited unless prior explicit approval has been granted, following the exceptions process laid out within this policy.

Any exception requires adherence to a rigorous approval process. Approvals, once granted, may be revoked by the University at any time, for any reason, or for no reason, at its sole discretion.

This policy applies to all members of the University community, including staff, students, visitors, and contractors, and where applicable, individuals residing in University-owned property. Specific provisions are included for the Harper Adams Students' Union (HASU) Shooting Club.

This policy does not form any part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services and it may be amended at the University's discretion. It has been developed following consultation with the Staff Consultative Group (SCG) and the Local Association of the University and College Union (UCU) via the University's Joint Negotiating & Consulting Committee (JCNC).

All staff, students, and visitors are expected to comply fully with this policy to maintain a safe and legal campus environment.

2. Scope

This policy covers:

- The use, possession, and storage of firearms, imitation firearms, and offensive weapons on University premises.
- Specific rules for students and staff regarding lawful activities involving firearms.
- Procedures for seeking approval for firearm-related activities.
- Guidelines for secure storage of firearms in University-owned residences or facilities.

3. General Principles

- The University is responsible for safe and compliant storage and use of firearms on its premises.
- The unauthorised possession or use of firearms, imitation firearms, or offensive weapons on University premises is strictly prohibited.
- Any firearms or offensive weapons brought onto campus without the necessary approvals or in violation of legal regulations may result in disciplinary action and legal consequences.
- Individuals must comply with all relevant legal and University requirements relating to the stage storage and use of authorised firearms.
- For students, no firearms, imitation firearms, or offensive weapons, or ammunition are to be stored in residential accommodation at any time for any reason.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms are defined to clarify the scope and application of the University's regulations on firearms, imitation firearms, and offensive weapons:

Campus (University Premises)

For the purposes of this policy, "campus" or "University premises" encompasses all properties owned, leased, or managed by the University, included but not limited to academic buildings, residential halls, administrative offices, sports facilities, and outdoor areas. This definition also extends to specific locations affiliated with University activities, including the shooting ground designated for use by the Students' Union. The term further includes any other designated off-campus sites where University-sanctioned activities or events take place and where the University holds a direct responsibility for safety and regulatory compliance.

Firearms

A firearm is any weapon from which a projectile can be discharged by means of an explosive charge, gas, or compressed air. This includes, but is not limited to: rifles, shotguns, handguns, and any devices capable of being converted to discharge a projectile.

Imitation firearms refer to any device or object that, while incapable of discharging a projectile, resembles a real firearm so closely that it could reasonably be mistaken for one.

Offensive Weapons & Other Prohibited Items

An offensive weapon is any item that is designed or adapted for use to inflict injury or cause harm to a person or is intended to be used for such purposes. This includes, but is not limited to: bladed weapons, crossbows, bows and arrows, batons, clubs, stun devices, chemicals and irritants, projectile weapons, explosives, martial arts weapons, and self-defence tools.

Exceptions to the Definitions

Items that may technically meet the criteria for an offensive weapon but are carried for legitimate, approved purposes may be considered for exception under the University's Approved Exception and Risk Assessment Procedures **(Appendices 3-4)**, provided they are stored and used safely. Such items could include but are not limited to: tools for academic research or teaching, sporting equipment, and agricultural or pest control equipment, including captive bolt guns.

5. Shotgun Storage and Use

The University permits the storage of shotguns for academic or extracurricular purposes under strict conditions.

Students

1. Registered students holding a valid shotgun certificate may store shotguns in the University's approved gun storage.
2. HASU club guns are registered to HASU club executives and are also be stored in the University's approved gun storage.

3. No weapons, including firearms or imitation firearms, or ammunition may be stored in student residences. Violation of this rule may result in disciplinary action and possible eviction from student accommodation.

4. Students must complete an application form and receive permission before bringing any shotgun to campus.

5. Shotguns must comply with Section 2 of the Firearms Act 1968. Non-compliance may lead to disciplinary actions and potential Police involvement.

6. Shotguns must be stored, unloaded, secured, and preferably fitted with a trigger lock whilst in the University's designated gun storage.

7. Ammunition must be stored separately within the University's gun storage in a locked container.

8. Access to the University's gun storage is restricted and must be arranged with the HASU Shooting Club executives. Students must log each use and strictly adhere to pre-agreed collection and return times. Under no circumstances should students carry firearms, imitation firearms, or offensive weapons around campus outside of direct transit to or from the designated gun storage location. Students must ensure prompt collection and return to storage to minimise the risk of causing concern or alarm to others. Failure to follow these protocols may result in loss of storage privileges and additional disciplinary action.

9. The HASU Shooting Club executives should undertake suitable shotgun safety training from industry recognised bodies, see **Appendix 2** for more details.

Staff

The University recognises that some staff may require the use of firearms or other restricted items as part of their professional duties (for example, course-related activities, pest control or agricultural purposes, or other licensed purposes), or may reside on University premises with legally registered firearms. In these circumstances, the following responsibilities for staff members regarding the safe storage of and use of firearms apply:

Use of firearms or other restricted items for work related purposes:

1. Firearms or other restricted items must be pre-authorised by the Head of Department requiring their use for legitimate, work-related purposes, and approved by the Chief Operating Officer, Head of Security, and Health & Safety Manager. Approval should include a detailed Risk Assessment for the activity (**see Appendix 3**).

2. Staff must hold valid and appropriate firearm certificates in accordance with the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended). A copy of the certificate must be provided to the University before any firearm is brought on to campus.

3. All firearms must be used in strict accordance with the terms of the individual's firearm certificate (where appropriate) and in line with relevant legislation and University

policies. This includes ensuring that firearms are only used by appropriately licensed individuals for the approved purpose.

4. All firearms and other restricted items, including ammunition, must be stored securely when not in use. Firearms should be stored in the University's gun storage facility (with space allocated by the Security team). Storage for restricted items for agricultural use (including captive bolt guns) must be risk assessed and all records retained securely.

5. Any misuse of firearms or other restricted items, breach of University policy, or any safety incident must be reported immediately to the Head of Security.

Storage of Firearms for Individuals Living on University Premises:

Staff, family members of staff, and other tenants living in University-owned accommodation who hold legally registered firearms or weapons are subject to specific storage requirements to ensure safety:

1. Individuals must notify the Head of Security upon signing a lease agreement if they intend to store a firearm in their residence. This includes submitting a copy of the valid firearms certificate and providing details of the weapon(s) for record-keeping purposes.

2. Firearms stored in residential accommodation must be secured in compliance with the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended). The University requires that:
    a. Firearms must be kept in a secure cabinet or other approved storage facility in line with the Home Office's guidance on firearm security.
    b. Ammunition must be stored separately in a locked container.

3. Firearms and ammunition must not be stored in communal areas, garages, or sheds within University accommodation.

4. Any use of stored firearms on campus must comply with the work-related approval process outlined above, or in line with the HASU shooting club guidelines. Firearms should not be discharged or used on campus outside of these approved purposes.

6. Insurance

Staff and students are advised to obtain insurance for shotguns and shooting activities. The University does not provide coverage for firearms stored on University premises.

7. Unauthorised Weapons

Any firearms, imitation firearms, or weapons on University premises without prior authorisation will be surrendered to the Police. Any member of staff or student found in violation may face disciplinary actions, up to and including dismissal (for staff), or withdrawal under the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Policy (for students). In addition, potential legal consequences, including referral to law enforcement authorities for breaches of the Firearms Act 1968 or other relevant laws may apply.

8. Exceptions

In limited circumstances, exceptions to the general policy on firearms storage and use may be granted for staff, such as ceremonial or cultural reasons, or in relation to specific work-related duties. Any such exceptions must be approved in writing by the Chief Operating Officer, Head of Security, and Health & Safety Manager. Exceptions also apply to Police officers carrying duty-issued weapons.

9. Application & Approval Process

Pre-Approval Requirements

Individuals (both students and staff) seeking to use and/or store firearms on University premises must apply using the form available on the Harper Adams Students' Union website (for students), or by submitting the form at **Appendix 3A** (for staff/visitors/tenants) and submitting to the Head of Security. Approval will be granted if:

- A valid reason for use is provided (for example Shooting Club membership, course-related activity, etc.).
- The applicant holds a valid firearms certificate.
- A comprehensive risk assessment is conducted.

Oversight and Record-Keeping

The University will maintain a register of all authorised firearms stored on campus and of all individuals who have been granted permission to use firearms. This record will include certificate details, storage locations, and dates of approved use.

Duration of Approvals

Students: approval for the possession or use of firearms, imitation firearms, or other offensive weapons on University premises will be granted on an academic year basis, requiring renewal at the beginning of each subsequent year of study. Annual renewals will be subject to continued compliance with the policy and the student's firearm license status.

Staff/others: for individuals requiring firearms, imitations firearms, or other offensive weapons as part of their University duties or personal residence in University-owned property, approvals will align with the conditions and duration of their firearm license. Renewals must coincide with the license's validity period, ensuring continued adherence to legal and institutional requirements.

Conditions for Renewal

All individuals must demonstrate ongoing compliance with University policies and procedures, including but not limited to adherence to storage protocols, allowing access to firearms or weapons only in approved circumstances, and providing prompt updates regarding the status of their firearm license.

Revocation of Approvals

The University reserves the right to withdraw or revoke approvals if an individual is found to be in breach of any policy condition, including refusal to comply with required searches, failure to maintain licensing conditions, or any conduct posing safety concerns.

Individuals who become subject to investigation by law enforcement or regulatory authorities concerning their firearm license, or whose firearm license is suspended, revoked, or otherwise compromised, must immediately inform the Head of Security. The Head of Security will assess the situation and, where appropriate, suspend or revoke approval for the continued possession or use of firearms, imitation firearms, or offensive weapons on University premises.

For individuals residing in University-owned accommodation who are not staff or students (including but not limited to family members of staff), it is a condition of the tenancy agreement that they must notify the University's Security team immediately if their firearm licence is revoked, suspended, or under investigation. Failure to do so may result in action being taken under the terms of their tenancy agreement, including the requirement to remove firearms or offensive weapons from University premises.

Consent to Searches

Approved individuals must agree to routine and ad-hoc searches of firearm storage locations as part of their continued eligibility for approval. Refusal to consent to searches may result in immediate revocation of the University's approval to possess or use firearms or weapons on University premises.

10. Security & Emergency Protocols

In case of an immediate threat, or suspected unauthorised possession of firearms or weapons, University security staff will notify local law enforcement authorities and take suitable action to mitigate the threat and ensure the safety of individuals on campus.

11. Further Information

This policy will be reviewed periodically and may be updated as needed. For day-to-day inquiries, students should contact Students' Union Director or Shooting Club Executives. Staff should contact the Head of Security, the Health & Safety Manager, or the Chief Operating Officer.

12. Related Policies and Legislation

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The University's Health and Safety Policy
- The Student Conduct and Disciplinary Policy
- The Staff Disciplinary Policy
- The Firearms Act 1968 (as amended)

Appendix 1: Definition of Section 2 Shotguns

Section 2 Shotguns as defined under the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended):

a. a shot gun within the meaning of this Act, that is to say a smooth-bore gun (not being an air gun) which —

   i. Has a barrel not less than 24 inches in length and does not have any barrel with a bore exceeding 2 inches in diameter;
   ii. Either has no magazine or has a non-detachable magazine incapable of holding more than two cartridges; and
   iii. Is not a revolver gun and

b. an air weapon (that is to say, an air rifle, air gun or air pistol which does not fall within section 5 (1) and which is not of a type declared by rules made by the Secretary of State under section 53 of this Act to be specially dangerous).

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Appendix 2: Training Providers

On occasion, providers of training courses will need store firearms within the University's gun storage facility. This includes the use of Section 1 firearms for the shooting assessment component of the PDS1 training awards issued by shooting and hunting academy. These awards are managed via the short courses office, with further details available on the University website.

1. **Compliance & Security Protocols**
   - To ensure full compliance with security guidelines for firearms storage and security issued by the national crime agency, the firearms act (1968) and the terms and conditions on the firearms certificate to whom the guns are registered, only the named certificate holder will have access to these firearms.
   - Firearms and ammunition storage follows stringent guidelines, with dedicated cabinets that meet BS7558 (1992) standards for firearm and component storage. Storage cabinets also comply with National Crime Agency guidance.
   - The University retains a record of all firearms and ammunition details stored within the gun storage facility for external training providers, and these records are available to auditors upon request.

2. **Mental Health & Wellbeing Support**
   - The University acknowledges the importance of mental health and wellbeing for anyone handling firearms, and all individuals authorised to use or store firearms, imitation firearms or offensive weapons are encouraged to proactively engage with available mental health and wellbeing resources as appropriate.
   - The University offers access to a range of mental health and wellbeing resources, including confidential counselling services, mental health advisors, and 24/7 support line for both staff and students. Staff and students who may benefit from these services are encouraged to reach out, ensuring they maintain both their personal wellbeing and compliance with firearm handling standards. As per the conditions on the Section 1 firearms certificate to which the guns are registered to, the quantity of ammunition for each Section 1 firearm is restricted and will not exceed this stated quantity.

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Appendix 3: Approved Exceptions Process

Criteria for Exception Requests

Exceptions to the general prohibition on firearms and offensive weapons may be granted in specific circumstances where the item is required for:

- Academic or research purposes
- Pest control or land management
- Lawful extracurricular activities, such as the HASU Shooting Club
- Approved ceremonial or display events
- Individuals residing in University-owned property who legally own firearms, providing all storage and safety regulations are met.

Procedure for Requesting an Exception

1. Individuals must complete the Exception Request Form on the Students' Union website (for students), or at **Appendix 3A** (for staff/visitors/tenants) and submit it to the Head of Security. The form must detail the reason for the exception, the type of firearm or weapon involved and the intended purpose.

2. The applicant must provide a copy of a valid firearms certificate (if applicable).

3. A comprehensive risk assessment (see below) must be completed and attached.

4. The request will be reviewed by the Head of Security or suitably qualified nominee. Any non-standard requests, or requests for which additional controls may be required will also be considered by the Chief Operating Officer, Health & Safety Manager, and relevant departmental head (if required), or suitably qualified nominees.

5. The validity of the request will be assessed, the risk assessment reviewed, and the proposed safety measures and legal requirements considered.

6. The decision will be communicated as soon as reasonably practicable after submission.

7. Approved exceptions will be granted with specific condition, including restrictions on where and when the firearm or weapon can be used or stored.

8. Reviews of the approved exception will take place to ensure continued compliance with the policy and legal standards.

9. If a request is denied, the applicant will receive a written explanation outlining the reasons for the decision.

Risk Assessment Procedures

To ensure the safety and security of all campus activities involving firearms, a risk assessment must be completed before any exception is approved.

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Appendix 3A: Approval Exception Form

To be completed by individuals wishing to store and/or use on campus firearms, imitation firearms, or items which could deemed offensive weapons. Completed forms to be returned to Head of Security via security@harper-adams.ac.uk

Privacy Notice and Control Statement
Harper Adams University is the data controller responsible for processing your personal data collected through this application form. We collect personal data such as your name and contact information solely for the purpose of assessing and managing safe use and storage of firearms and weapons on campus. Your responses will be treated confidentially and securely. Only authorised individuals will have access to your data.

Your personal data will be retained for as long as is necessary to fulfil the purposes outlined in this notice or as required by law. We implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to safeguard your personal data against unauthorised access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction.

You have the right to access, rectify, or erase your personal data that we hold. If you wish to exercise any of these rights or have any concerns about the processing of your personal data, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer on dpo@harper-adams.ac.uk.

1. Name:

2. Affiliation with the University:
    a. Student
    b. Staff
    c. Visitor
    d. Contractor
    e. Tenant
    f. Other

3. Email address:

4. Phone Number:

5. University ID (if applicable):

6. Details of the Weapon/Item:

7. Description of the Item (including make, model, calibre, dimensions, etc):

8. Purpose for possession or use on campus (e.g. academic course, research, shooting club, animal dispatch, pest control, personal possession in University-owned property (staff housing only)):

9. Is the item licenced or registered (please append evidence):

10. Is the item required for ongoing use or for a single event:

11. Date you will require storage from:

Declaration and Submission

By submitting this form, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the Harper Adams University Policy on the Safe Use and Storage of Firearms. I agree to adhere to all conditions set out in the policy. I understand that any misuse or violation of the policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including legal consequences.

Name:

Sign:

Date:

Note to Security: Retain a copy of the form, together with a note of any additional restrictions, safety measures, or conditions for this exception on the Security SharePoint site. Allocate gun storage and retain the record. Send a copy of any **student** forms and details of allocation and any additional restrictions (if required) to the Students' Union for the Shooting Club records.

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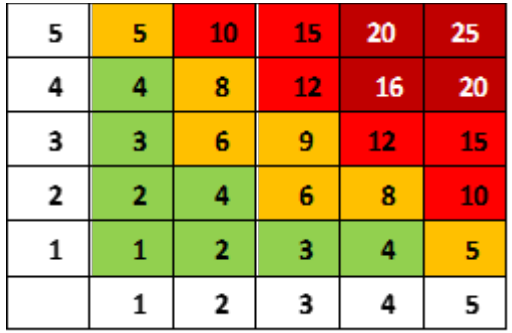
Appendix 4. Risk Assessment Template



5	5	10	15	20	25
4	4	8	12	16	20
3	3	6	9	12	15
2	2	4	6	8	10
1	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5

Likelihood Rating	**Likelihood Descriptor**	**Severity Rating**	**Severity Descriptor**
1	Rare: So unlikely that it is not expected to happen	1	Insignificant Injury: Non-First Aid. Insignificant property/equipment damage.
2	Unlikely: So unlikely that it is not expected to happen in the foreseeable future	2	Minor injury: First Aid treatment on-site and/or the injured person is unfit for their normal work for less than three days. Minor property/equipment damage: Remains safe and serviceable.
3	Possible: It may occur from time to time	3	Serious injury/ill health: First Aid treatment off-site and/or the person affected is unfit to carry out their normal work for more than three consecutive days. Extensive property/equipment damage: No longer safe and serviceable.
4		4	Major injury/ill health: As defined by RIDDOR. Major equipment or property event: As defined by RIDDOR.

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Likelihood Rating	Likelihood Descriptor	Severity Rating	Severity Descriptor
	Likely: It will occur, but not as an everyday event		
5	Certain: It will happen and soon	5	Fatal: Work or activity-related death.

Risk Rating (L x S)	Risk level (L / M / H / VH)	Risk Rating Descriptor
1-4	Low	Action has been taken to lower the risk to a satisfactory level. Monitor and maintain controls.
5-9	Med	Action may be required to control the risk further. Immediate short-term measures may be required. Monitor closely, review and maintain controls.
10-15	High	Risk is too great. Stop. Isolation or cordon may be required. Risk must be reduced.
16-25	Very High	Risk is too great, and event may be imminent. Stop. Isolation or cordon may be required. Risk must be reduced.

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Specific Details	
Risk Assessment Completed By:	
Applicant Name:	
Position/Role:	
Purpose of Use:	
Type of Firearm/Weapon:	
Date(s) of Use:	
Location of Use and Storage:	
Department Head Approval:	
Authorisation (COO/Security/H&S)	

Hazard	Who Harmed?	How Harmed?	Control Measures	Residual Risk (L X S = R)		
				Likelihood	Severity	Rating
Physical injury from firearm	Visitor Public Contractor Student Staff					

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Hazard	Who Harmed?	How Harmed?	Control Measures	Residual Risk (L X S = R)		
				Likelihood	Severity	Rating
Lack of Security of Storage and Access						
Lack of Competence						
Lack of Supervision and Control						
Stress / Anxiety to users / others						
Lack of Emergency Preparedness						
Reputational Harm						