Health and Safety Risk Assessment Procedure

Document Control

Version	Date Document Reviewed	Publication on Web Site	Date of next Review	Summary of main changes
0.1	March 2016	April 2016	March 2017	o Conversion from Policy to Procedure o Checked for legal compliance o Minor changes to update terminology or to reflect current practices
0.2	October 2017	October 2017	October 2018	o Checked for legal compliance o Minor changes to text o Webpage links embedded into relevant text
0.3	April 2019	April 2019	November 2019	o Checked for legal compliance
0.4	August 2021	August 2021	August 2022	o Checked for legal compliance o Section 2, updated section on University Health and Safety Advice to include the Estates Safety and Compliance Officer and local School/Departmental H&S staff o Section 3 updated to reflect the new Risk Assessment Templates for Higher Risk and Lower Risk areas o Section 3, Stage 4 updated to include links to the Risk Assessment Templates for higher risk and lower risk areas

Risk Assessment Procedure

1   Introduction

This procedure forms part of the University's Health and Safety Management System and should be considered in relation to the University's Safety, Health and Wellbeing Policy statement to ensure that the risks inherent in the activities of the University are assessed using the process of risk assessment.

This procedure applies to all Schools and Departments within the University. The aim is to outline the risk assessment process and is intended to assist managers, staff and students in complying with the requirements of Regulation 3 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended).

Where a work activity or area is being assessed for the first time, an assessment is particularly useful to identify where a more specific assessment is required to fulfil the requirements of other regulations, such as those relating to hazardous substances, manual handling and display screen equipment etc. In these cases, the relevant University procedure and associated assessment forms should be referred to.

2   Accountabilities

Schools/Directorates/Departments

The individual Deans of School and Director/Heads of Professional Support Departments are accountable to the Executive Members for the implementation of this procedure and are responsible for ensuring that, within their areas of responsibility and control:

o   An overarching assessment for the School/Directorate is in place so that an overview of all relevant hazards are identified. This will enable standardised control measures to be implemented across different departments where the hazards are the same.
o   They monitor that all necessary risk assessments are carried out and appropriate measures put in place so as to eliminate or reduce the risk of injury, ill-health or damage to property
o   An up-to-date register of risk assessments is maintained
o   Relevant staff are identified to conduct risk assessments and that they receive adequate training on risk assessment technique
o   There is a process in place for the review of assessments
o   Copies of all relevant risk assessments are readily available
o   Staff are provided with any relevant information on the risks to their health and safety, including any preventative and protective measures in place
o   Any person or group external to the School/Directorate/Department working in the area is provided with relevant information on the risks to their health and safety arising out of or in connection with the areas undertakings.

Duties of implementation may be delegated to individuals in a manner that accurately reflects their existing levels of competence and responsibility. In certain circumstances, the advice and assistance of specialist advisors may be required.

University Health and Safety Advice

Where a person carrying out a risk assessment requires advice or assistance to gain a greater understanding of the hazards/risks involved then advice and assistance can be sought from the University Health and Safety Advisor and/or other specialist advisors in the University including Occupational Health, Laser Safety Advisor, Biological Safety Advisor, Estates Safety and Compliance Officer etc. Advice and assistance can also be sought from the local Health and Safety Co-ordinators/Champions within the relevant Schools and Departments.

Where the risk assessment indicates that health surveillance is required, then additional input and advice can be sought from the Occupational Health Department to determine whether a health surveillance programme should be put in place.

3   Risk Assessment

3.1   Putting Risk Assessment into Practice

The risk assessment process demonstrates that the factors relevant to work activities have been considered and that sensible and proportionate measures have been taken. It also assists Schools and Departments in managing the risks and prioritising any actions and resources required.

For Schools and Departments to establish a programme of risk assessments, a number of approaches can be taken and will depend on the size and complexity of the area being covered, the work activities and the hazards and risks.

The first step is to decide what the best approach will be. Review the School or Department as a whole and decide if it can be divided up into specific departments, different areas and/or different locations etc. Examples of different areas can include office areas, lecture theatres, laboratories, workshops, plant rooms etc.

Within this group, the next stage is to look at each work activity and associated hazards and decide if they can be divided into types of risk assessment. The types can vary according to requirements for example:

o   Hazard specific, for example, fire, electricity, slip trip fall, chemical, biological
o   Activity specific, for example, conference/event, overseas travel, student fieldwork, educational visits, working at height, working in confined spaces
o   Equipment specific, for example, use of hand tools

If a hazard or activity is the same or similar across a number of areas then a risk assessment can be developed that covers this. Where this is done, each area must still be checked and where there is some deviation from the normal, this must be noted and the relevant controls recorded for this particular area/activity.

Once this is carried out, a plan can be developed to conduct the assessments required with priority given to those that present a higher risk. Ensure that staff identified to carry out any risk assessments, have attended a risk assessor course. Details of training can be found on the Health and Safety webpage.

An up-to-date register of the risk assessments (i.e. a list of the risk assessments and a copy of the assessments) must be kept within the School or Department in a central place, which staff can access.

3.3   Conducting the risk assessment

A risk assessment is a systematic examination of work activities so that the hazards and associated risks can be identified, the current controls taken into account and an informed decision taken as to whether further measures are required to reduce the level of risk further to safeguard health and safety.

Risk assessment can be broken into the following 5 stages:

o   Identify the hazards
o   Decide who might be harmed and how
o   Evaluate the risks and decide on additional control measures
o   Record the significant findings
o   Review the assessment

Stage 1: Identify the hazards

Identify and record all the workplace activities and identify the hazards presented by those activities.

To identify the hazards, observe the work environment and the tasks carried out, speak to staff that know the work activities and are experienced in them, take into consideration patterns of work (e.g. shift work), external factors (e.g. impact of weather on outdoor activities), relevant legal requirements, standards and guidance (e.g. manufacturer's instructions, codes of practice, workplace exposure limits, chemical safety data sheets etc.), accident and ill-health records.

Where staff of different employers or different areas work in the same work area or participate in the same work activity, co-operation between each is required to produce an overall risk assessment.

The assistance of a specialist competent person must be sought wherever risks are complex or unfamiliar.

The hazards and/or activities should be recorded in the relevant University Risk Assessment form. The **list of hazards** on the Health and Safety webpage may be useful in helping to identify potential hazards.

Stage 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

Identify all the persons or groups that may be affected by the hazards identified. Take into consideration people that may not be directly involved in the work activity but may work or use the area, for example, staff from other departments, students, visitors, contractors, domestic assistants, security officers, maintenance staff etc.

Also, identify groups of people that may be at a particular risk, for example, new and expectant mothers, young people at the University through study, placement or work experience, lone workers, disabled persons or those that have a pre-existing health condition.

The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 should be taken into account to make reasonable adjustments so as not to discriminate against persons who are covered by the protected characteristics of the Act. Care should be taken to ensure that risk assessments take into account the particular needs of the person(s) and do not unnecessarily exclude them. Advice can be sought from the Health and Safety Advisor and/or the Equality and Diversity Advisor and where a student is involved, advice can be sought from Student Services.

Take into consideration the potential extent of harm that may result from the hazard, for example, cut, bruise, fracture, acute ill-health (e.g. allergic reaction, asphyxiation), chronic ill-health (e.g. noise induced hearing loss, musculoskeletal disorders).

The details of who might be harmed and how, should be recorded in the relevant University Risk Assessment form.

Stage 3: Evaluate the Risk and decide on additional control measures

Determine what workplace control measures are already in place (e.g. Permit-to-work systems, exposure limits, specialised equipment, safe systems of work, University and local procedures, training, personal protective equipment etc), whether the measures are adequate and complied with. These should be recorded in the relevant University Risk Assessment form to record the current control measures in place.

Using the information in the following table, determine the severity and likelihood of any harm occurring to provide an estimate of the remaining level of risk (e.g. the severity is slightly harmful and the likelihood of occurrence is unlikely, then the remaining level of risk is tolerable). Using this methodology can assist in prioritising any further actions required and these should be recorded in the relevant University Risk Assessment Form (ie. Harm, Likelihood and Risk Rating columns).

Remaining Level of Risk			
	Severity		
	Slightly harmful For example, minor cuts, bruises, eye irritation, headaches, ill-health leading to temporary discomfort	**Harmful** For example, burns, concussion, serious sprains, fractures, deafness, dermatitis, asthma, work related upper limb disorders, ill-health leading to a permanent minor disability	**Extremely harmful** For example, amputation, major fracture, poisoning, multiple injuries, fatal injuries, occupational cancer, acute fatal diseases
Highly unlikely May occur in exceptional or unforeseeable circumstances	Trivial Risk No further action is required	Tolerable Risk No additional controls are required, however monitoring is required to ensure that controls are maintained	Moderate Risk Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period.
Unlikely	**Tolerable Risk**	Moderate Risk	Substantial Risk

May occur where an unlikely sequence of events/failures happen	No additional controls are required, however monitoring is required to ensure that controls are maintained	Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period.	Work should not be started until the risk has been reduced. Considerable resources may have to be allocated to reduce the risk. Where the risk involves work in progress, urgent action should be taken.
Likely Likelihood of harm occurring is easily foreseeable under normal circumstances. For example, accidents and ill-health issues have been reported	**Moderate Risk** Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period.	**Substantial Risk** Work should not be started until the risk has been reduced. Considerable resources may have to be allocated to reduce the risk. Where the risk involves work in progress, urgent action should be taken.	**Intolerable Risk** Work should not be started until the risk has been reduced. If it is not possible to reduce risk even with unlimited resources, work has to remain prohibited.

After evaluating the remaining level of risk, determine if this can be reduced to a lower level using the hierarchy of control measures in order of priority as follows:

1. Elimination   Where possible, avoid the risk completely by removing the hazard or redesigning the work activity. For example, materials are supplied pre-painted rather than having to paint them.

2. Substitution   If the hazard cannot be removed, substitute it with a less hazardous one. For example, use of a water based paint rather than spirit based. Care should be taken to ensure the alternative is safer than the original.

3. Engineering Controls   Give priority to measures that protect the whole area rather than the individual such as enclosing a process rather than providing personal protective equipment. For example, use of a fume hood when using chemicals, guarding dangerous parts of machinery or equipment.

4. Administrative controls   Identify and implement procedures required for working safely. For example, reduce the exposure time to hazards, prohibit the use of mobile phones in hazardous areas, provide safety signage, safe systems of work, local procedures, training, emergency procedures, health surveillance requirements etc.

5. Personal Protective Equipment: This should be used only as a last resort after all other control measures have been considered and found to be ineffective in controlling the risks.

In any risk assessment process it is essential that by identifying a solution for one hazard, the risk is not transferred (ie. another hazard created or the hazard transferred to another area).

The additional control measures should be recorded in the relevant University Risk Assessment Form. Development of an action plan or inclusion within an existing action plan may be helpful to ensure completion and tracking of any required actions.

Stage 4: Record the significant findings

The findings of the risk assessment should be recorded on the relevant University Risk Assessment Form as follows:

- The General Risk Assessment Template (HR) is suitable for use in Schools and Departments that have areas/work activities that would be classified as being of higher risk. For example, laboratories, field trips, workshops etc.

- The General Risk Assessment (LR) is suitable for use in Schools and Departments that have areas/work activities that would be classified as being of lower risk. For example, offices, computer labs etc.

Please note that some Schools and Departments are in the process of transitioning from the previous GCU General Risk Assessment Template.

A copy of the Risk Assessment should be kept available for viewing and staff should be provided with adequate information regarding the risks to their health and safety identified by the assessment and the preventative and protective arrangements in place.

In addition, staff from an outside employer working in the University should be provided with information on the risks to which they may be exposed whilst working on University premises and the measures taken to control them. For example, safe working practice, evacuation procedure, first aid procedure and identifying areas which they are not authorised to enter. The host of the non-members of staff will be responsible for the conduct and safety of these persons at all times whilst they are on University premises.

Where a work activity is complex, a safe system of work or local procedure should be written.

Where the risk assessment identifies that a specific assessment is required (eg. COSHH, Manual Handling, DSE assessment etc), the documents should be cross-referenced.

Stage 5: Review the risk assessment

The University procedure is that risk assessments should be reviewed on an annual basis unless it is no longer valid, for example, reports of near misses, accidents or cases of ill-health attributable to the activity and any changes in the activity, location, staff, equipment etc.

4   Further Information

Risk assessment - A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace

http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.htm