
HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT



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1 SUMMARY

This Safety Code of Practice is aimed at those who need to risk assess work activities. This includes routine and non-routine work, one-off as well as regular activities, research work, teaching and practical classes, student projects, on and off campus activities and fieldwork. It is intended to help staff, and in some cases students, complete a risk assessment in a logical manner, so that the proposed work is undertaken safely and in accordance with legislation and good practice.

The person who completes the risk assessment is ideally the person who manages the area/process/activity. Training and advice is available from Health and Safety Services or contact your Area Health and Safety Co-ordinator for advice.

A risk assessment is not a paper exercise; it provides a method to ensure that all appropriate precautions or "controls" have been considered to make the work as safe as reasonably practicable, and a means of monitoring to check that improvements are being implemented effectively.

A risk assessment should be "suitable and sufficient" i.e. it should contain the following information:

- Identification of significant hazards
- Identification of the existing precautions to reduce the risk i.e. "risk controls" (taking into account that elimination of the hazard is the first choice and that reliance on personal protective equipment should generally be the last choice)
- Identification of any further controls required, in accordance with legislation and good practice, and based on the knowledge and experience of the assessor
- Identification of the person responsible for completing any actions to implement the controls, and a target date for completion
- Confirmation when the action has been completed, including date.

Information about the risks must be communicated to all those who may be affected (staff, students, visitors, contractors), preferably in writing. The methods of communication must be appropriate to the target audience, so that staff/students understand: what could go wrong; how to work safely; and what the emergency procedures are.

Information about 'standard' risks can be communicated via local rules, Area Health and Safety Codes etc., but in some cases the information may need to be presented in a different way. Where the work is higher risk, and recurrent, risk assessments should be supplemented with a Standard Operating Procedure that staff or students can be trained to work to.

The level of detail in the risk assessment should be proportionate to the risk. For low risk office environments, this is a straightforward process based on informed judgement and reference to guidance (University Safety Codes of Practice, Safety Notes, and external sources such as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) web site).

- Where the work is unique, complex, or involves multiple hazards which cannot be covered by standard protocols or procedures, such as in research work, a specific risk assessment is necessary. This must consider the options for doing the work, and identify a method that will reduce all the risks to as low as reasonably practicable.

2 THE RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

<p>STEP 1 IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk around your workplace and look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Ask staff what they think. • Visit the H&SS and HSE websites for practical guidance, or contact H&SS. • Check manufacturers' instructions or data sheets for chemicals & equipment. • Have a look back at your accident and ill-health records. • Remember to think about long-term hazards to health (e.g. high levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances) as well as safety hazards.
<p>STEP 2 DECIDE WHO MIGHT BE HARMED AND HOW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify groups of people who might be harmed. • Remember that some workers have particular requirements, e.g. new and young workers and students, new or expectant mothers, people with disabilities, people for whom English is a second language. • Remember cleaners, visitors, contractors, maintenance workers etc, who may not be in the workplace all the time, and members of the public. • If you share your workplace, think about how your work might affect others. • Talk to staff and ask if they can think of anyone you may have missed.
<p>STEP 3 EVALUATE THE RISKS AND DECIDE ON PRECAUTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide what you have to do to protect people from harm so far as 'reasonably practicable' by comparing what you are currently doing, or planning to do, doing with good practice. Don't assume that your current controls are effective because nothing has happened (yet). • Consider: Can I get rid of the hazard altogether? If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely? Think 'what if'. Plan for something going wrong. • When controlling risks, apply the principles below, if possible in the following order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - try a less risky option (e.g. switch to using a less hazardous chemical) - prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding, barriers etc.) - organise work to reduce exposure or the numbers of people likely to be exposed (e.g. issue personal protective equipment such as clothing, footwear, goggles etc.) and provide welfare facilities (e.g. first aid and washing facilities for removal of contamination)
<p>STEP 4 RECORD YOUR FINDINGS AND IMPLEMENT THEM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down the results of your risk assessment. You need to be able to show that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a proper check has been made - you asked who might be affected - you dealt with all the significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved - the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low - you involved your staff or their representatives in the process. • Make an action plan to deal with the most important improvement actions first.
<p>STEP 5 REVIEW YOUR RISK ASSESSMENT AND UPDATE IF NECESSARY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review what you are doing on an ongoing basis, ideally annually. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check for new equipment, substances, procedures or changes in staff that could lead to new risks. - Are there improvements you still need to make? - Have your workers spotted a problem? - Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses? • If there is a significant change, don't wait for the annual review to amend your risk assessment. • If you're planning future changes to how you work, or introducing new work activities, think about the risk assessment in parallel and try to design out hazards.

3 SCOPE

This Safety Code of Practice explains what managers, staff, students and tenants have to do to identify hazards and control risks in the workplace. This Code applies to all staff, however it is of particular importance to those with line management responsibilities and those who are responsible for undertaking risk assessments (e.g. research projects, student projects, high risk tasks, and for general areas).

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to make "suitable and sufficient" assessments of the health and safety risks to employees and non-employees arising from their work activities. There is a requirement to record the findings of these assessments and communicate them to all relevant persons.

"A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm". HSE *Five Steps to Risk Assessment* INDG 163(rev2) 06/05.

3.1 Purpose of risk assessment

The requirement for risk assessment and sensible risk management applies to all work activities where there is a risk of significant injury, ill health or property/equipment damage. The aim of the risk assessment process is to prevent death, injuries, or work related ill health, including mental health problems; near misses (because injury or death could result next time); and damage to property, equipment and the environment.

An effective risk assessment process will help to identify the measures that need to be taken to keep people safe, by removing or reducing risk, as well as to comply with health and safety law. It is not a bureaucratic exercise that results in paper that is not acted upon; a good written risk assessment should help with communicating and managing the risks.

3.2 Suitable and sufficient

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment should:

- Cover the hazards and significant risks of all work activities, including routine and non-routine work, one-off as well as regular activities, research work as well as teaching classes, events, and off campus activity and events.
- Be systematic in the way in which hazards are identified, risks are assessed and controls are implemented.
- Take account of legislative and university requirements and generally accepted good practice.
- Take account of conditions in the local workplace i.e. not cut and pasted from someone else's generic assessment.
- Include risks to health as well as safety.
- Take account of risks to non-employees, including students, visitors, contractors and guests.

- Identify groups of people who may be at particular risk, such as young or inexperienced persons, expectant mothers, visitors unfamiliar with the premises, people with disabilities, health conditions or learning difficulties; people for whom English is a second language.
- Be undertaken before work starts, and subsequently reviewed in the light of experience. NB This would also apply to the design of new or refurbished workplaces, so that the opportunity is taken to design out hazards, or modify the process, or provide essential controls (e.g. hand wash facilities in laboratories) as part of the design phase, rather than as an afterthought.
- Be brought to the attention of those people who might be exposed to the risks, in a meaningful and comprehensible way, so that they know what to do to avoid being hurt.

Priority should be given to serious risks which present the greatest threat to people or property, and to less serious risks which could affect multiple people. Trivial risks can be ignored.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Manager's responsibilities

Heads of Schools/Services and other managers must ensure that:

- Suitable and sufficient assessments of work activities in their areas are undertaken, covering general workplace hazards such as fire, slips and trips, electrical safety, lone working.
- Risk assessments are completed for teaching activities and research projects, and for non-routine activities such as maintenance.
- **The actions required to control risks are implemented.**
- All persons (including staff, students, tenants and contractors) are made aware of the outcome of risk assessments that apply to them.
- Staff responsible for undertaking assessments are clearly identified and are competent—see the guidance in Table 1.
- Risk assessments are reviewed when circumstances change and on a regular basis to make sure they remain up-to-date, and are modified in the light of experience.
- Adequate time, support and resources are allocated to do risk assessments and to implement the findings.
- A **risk assessment log** is maintained locally if deemed necessary to implement an effective health and safety management system.

4.2 Duties of staff, students and building occupants

All staff, students and other building occupants must comply with the controls identified in risk assessments for their workplace or work activity or for the building in general.

In a shared workplace where other building occupants may be placed at risk, information about the risks should be shared with building management so that all parties can co-operate and co-ordinate response procedures.

Where university risk assessments identify potential risks to tenants, the outcome of the risk assessment should be shared with the tenants so that they understand what they need to do to safeguard their own employees. Tenants are responsible for risk assessments that apply to their own work activities.

Guidance:

The primary risk that could cross boundaries between different building occupiers and tenants is fire. All building occupants in shared workplaces have a duty to co-operate with the University by complying with fire prevention and fire safety measures.

Other risks that could place other building occupants at risk include escape/release of hazardous substances such as toxic or asphyxiant gases, biological material, radiation, or accidents involving pressure vessels and gases under pressure.

5 SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

In addition to the general requirement for risk assessment under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, other legislation requires specific risk assessments to be undertaken, in particular:

- **Fire safety** – Building Fire Risk Assessments are undertaken by the Fire Safety Advisor, although Schools/Departments may have requirements placed on them by the findings, and they should consider basic fire safety in their general risk assessments of the workplace (see Safety Code of Practice 34A). (Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order).
- **Dangerous substances** – These include substances, preparations and dusts with the potential to give rise to fires, explosions and similar (energy releasing) energetic events (such as runaway exothermic reactions). Examples include: flammable liquids (petrol, solvents), gases (acetylene, hydrogen, natural), dusts produced by wood cutting and sanding, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). (see Safety Guide 24). (Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmosphere Regulations).
- **Hazardous substances** - Assessments need to be completed which detail how exposure to hazardous material such as chemicals or biological agents will be prevented or if this is not possible, controlled (see Safety Codes of Practice 14 and 28). (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations).
- **Use of computer workstations and other display screen equipment** – Assessments of individual users and workstations are required to ensure that users and workstations are compatible and any risks to health from poor layout or poor practice are minimised (see Safety Guide 13) (Display Screen Equipment Regulations).
- **Manual handling and lifting** - Assessments should consider the manual handling and lifting of items at work and identify whether alternatives can be put in place to reduce the risk (see Safety Guide 37). (Manual Handling Operations Regulations).
- **Noise** - Exposure to noise at work must be assessed where it is likely to exceed 80 dB(A) (as a rough guide this is when you struggle to hold a conversation at 2 metres). Where noise levels exceed 85 dB(A) other measures are required to reduce noise e.g. by engineering means, but where there is no alternative, by the provision of suitable hearing protection (see Safety Code of Practice 42). (Control of Noise at Work Regulations).

- **Radiation** - Any work with ionising radiation including X-rays, sealed and unsealed sources requires a specific risk assessment. Assessments include calculations of radiation dose and control measures to reduce exposure as low as reasonably practicable. (Ionising Radiations Regulations).
- **Genetic Modification** – any work which will involve the genetic modification of organisms including plants, animals or microorganisms must be assessed to identify scope of work, the likely effect of the proposed modification and any potential effect on human health or the environment (See Safety Guide 15). (Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations).

In some workplaces, managers may need to risk assess processes that involve multiple hazards such as chemicals, biological agents, hazardous substances, noise, manual handling etc. Where this applies, each hazard needs to be considered in the context of the process, rather than as discrete assessments, and consideration must be given to the knock-on and cumulative effects of failure. Managers should consult Health and Safety Services for assistance with completing more complex assessments.

6 WHO SHOULD DO RISK ASSESSMENTS?

6.1 Competent person

Staff and others who undertake assessments must be competent to do so. This means they should:

- Be familiar with the workplace, machine, process etc. they are assessing, and are able to conduct a comprehensive and thorough review.
- Have received adequate training in how to carry out a risk assessment.
- Have sufficient knowledge, experience and training to enable them to identify the full range of hazards and the precautions required to comply with the law and with university procedures.
- Be able to communicate the results to those people affected by the assessment in a way that enables those people to understand what the risks are, and what they need to do to protect themselves and others.

Guidance:

Appendix 1 gives guidance on who may be appropriate to carry out risk assessments.

Health and Safety Services run training courses on risk assessment – see H&SS web site for details. It is strongly recommended that anyone who has to undertake a risk assessment should attend.

- Note: Area Health and Safety Co-ordinators are **not** responsible for risk assessments by virtue of being an Area Health and Safety Co-ordinator. They should be able to provide colleagues with information and advice and will usually be involved in checking that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place for the range of activities undertaken in their Department/ School/ Service. They may be asked, on behalf of their Head of School or Head of Service, to undertake general area risk assessments, co-ordinate the risk assessment and review process, maintain a Risk Assessment Log, and make the latter available for monitoring purposes.

7 HOW DO YOU DO A RISK ASSESSMENT?

7.1 Hazard and risk

When undertaking a risk assessment it is important to have a clear grasp of two terms, hazard and risk:

- A **Hazard** is anything which has the potential to cause harm e.g. an electric plug socket
- **Risk** is a combination of the likelihood or probability of harm occurring, and the consequences or severity of any harm that results e.g. the risk from an electric socket is normally low but is increased if the socket is damaged, and the resulting injury may be serious.

It is important that you understand the difference between hazard and risk - hazards cannot always be eliminated, but the risk that they pose can be controlled or reduced by well thought out working practices.

7.2 Initial consideration of activities

The first stage is to identify the area/ process/ activities for which you are responsible and to identify which activities need to be risk assessed. Risk assessments are required for all University work activities that could result in significant injury or ill health. This includes the following:

- Work areas (e.g. covering the general risks that can arise in a building, office, workshop etc. and including lone working (see Safety Code of Practice 7 for out-of-hours working))
- Work activities i.e. specific tasks
- Use of specific work equipment and machinery
- Research projects (which may be further broken down into phases or associated tasks)
- Events (see Safety Code of Practice 33 for further advice)
- Field work (see Safety Code of Practice 32 for further advice)
- Overseas travel and working overseas (see Safety Code of Practice 38 for further advice)
- Routine and non-routine activities
- Emergency situations which might arise e.g. fires, explosions, spillage and accidental contamination inside and outside buildings.

Having completed your initial listing of all the activities that require a risk assessment, you should consult others who may be involved or who have previous experience to ensure that you have identified everything, or to get their assistance in completing the next stages of the risk assessment process.

7.3 Initial survey of the area/ activity to be assessed

Having determined the areas/ activities etc. which need to be assessed, it is good practice to go and observe the task/activity/work. This will help you to identify the hazards that are present, and any factors which may increase or reduce the risk.

The issues which you may wish to check on include:

- What is the area used for?
- What activities take place?
- When are the activities taking place (e.g. during normal working hours, outside normal working hours, in good or bad weather conditions, during maintenance shut-downs etc.)?
- What else is happening at the same time?
- How is the proposed work to be undertaken?
- Does the activity involve hazardous machinery or materials e.g. rotating or cutting machinery, pressure systems, chemicals, biological agents, radiation, lasers?
- Is the floor suitable and in good condition?
- Is the lighting suitable for the work activities?
- Is there adequate space?
- What type of ventilation is there - natural/mechanical? Is this suitable/ sufficient?

Additionally, the following questions may be relevant:

- Do you have access to risk assessments which may already exist for the area/ activity?
- Do you have the manuals or data sheets for any equipment or substance that you are working with?
- Who is leading the work/ activity?
- What experience/ qualifications have they got?
- What previous experience does the organisation have of undertaking this activity?
- Is there a history of accidents/incidents associated with this activity?
- What if the unexpected, unlikely event actually happened?

7.4 Determine the hazards

Next, you should confirm the significant hazards that exist. It is good practice to speak to others who work in the area/undertake the task to get their help in identifying hazards, as well as drawing upon the results of your initial survey.

Guidance:

Remember, a hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm if not managed properly. You do not need to consider trivial risks. You should consider those that are capable of creating a real risk to health and safety which any reasonable person would appreciate and would take steps to guard against. For example, lifting a ream of paper is not significant, but lifting a whole box of paper may be significant, especially if the activity is repetitive, or undertaken in cramped conditions.

7.5 Consider who might be harmed

You need to consider who might be harmed by your activities. There are five groups of people whom you may need to consider when determining this: **staff, students; tenants and contractors; the public; and vulnerable people.**

Guidance:

Vulnerable people are those who may be at particular risk, including:

- Young workers, trainees, inexperienced students
- New and expectant mothers, and for some hazards, women of child bearing age
- People with reduced mobility or disabilities, including learning disabilities
- Older people, for example volunteers in research studies

7.6 Identifying existing controls

It is likely that having identified the hazards that you will already have existing controls in place. You should therefore note down all the existing controls that you have for each hazard e.g. in order to reduce the risk from portable electrical appliances you may have a contractor or in-house staff to carry out portable appliance testing.

If a completely new activity is being assessed, you will need to start from first principles, by thinking through how you intend to undertake the task, and what could go wrong.

7.7 Determine if any further action is required

Having identified the existing controls, you then need to:

- Ask yourself if they are working, or do you need to go back to first principles and re-assess?
- Consider if any further action is required to reduce any residual risk to as low as reasonably practicable, to match good practice, or to comply with specific legislative requirements, some of which may be mandatory i.e. "Absolute".

"Reasonably practicable" is a narrower term than 'physically possible' ... in simple language, it means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or trouble. You do not need to take action if it would be grossly disproportionate to the level of risk.

Absolute duties

There also some legal requirements that are absolute, for example the need to put in place specific protective measures if working with carcinogens; or the requirement for local exhaust ventilation required under COSHH to be inspected and tested. If there is any doubt about legal requirements, you should consult Health and Safety Services.

In determining if further action is required, you should identify relevant standards and compare what you are doing already, or what you intend to do, with them. Managers/supervisors are expected to know about the hazards in their workplaces, and the main legal requirements relating to their work (even if only in outline). If you do not know you must find out.

Guidance:

Remember that standards and working practices can change over time, and what was considered good practice a number of years ago may now have been overtaken by improved ways of working.

Sources of health and safety information include:

- University Safety Codes of Practice, Guides and Notes
- Legislation and Approved Codes of Practice
- HSE guidance
- Product information from suppliers and manufacturers
- Industry and trade association guidance
- British and European standards

The assessor should ask whether the controls that are already in place achieve the desired standard, or whether the level of residual risk places themselves or others at serious or intolerable risk, and further action is therefore required.

All control measures should be based upon the hierarchy of risk controls (see below).

Guidance: Hierarchy of Control – the range of options for controlling risk in order of preferred use. It will usually be necessary to adopt a combination of control measures.

Eliminate – Can the hazard be eliminated stopping the activity, or working in an different way that entirely avoids the hazard?

Reduce by substitution – reduce the risk by changing the way you do the work e.g. is there an alternative product, or can smaller quantities be used? Can the number of people potentially exposed be reduced?

Engineering Controls – e.g. can the number of people exposed be reduced by restricting access, can physical barriers be used to provide protection e.g. fume cupboards, microbiological safety cabinets, acoustic panels? Can access to dangerous parts be restricted by interlocking guards or other types of machinery guarding?

Information, instruction, training and supervision i.e. administrative controls – written procedures, safe systems of work, training, signage. Ensure employees understand what they must do and when, how they must do it and what activities are prohibited.

Personal Protection - Is personal protective equipment (PPE) required e.g. safety shoes, lab coat, eye protection, gloves, ear defenders, hard hat? Note that this is a last resort, as PPE has to be correctly specified, has to be worn correctly, and only protects the individual wearer.

Discipline – If all else fails and controls are being ignored disciplinary procedures should be followed.

If further control measures are needed, you must identify who is responsible for ensuring that the control measure is put in place and a time frame for completion/implementation.

Further action could include e.g.:

- redesigning the workflow
- providing training or refresher training
- replacing equipment
- ensuring that maintenance is in place
- reminding workers about safe working practices etc.

7.8 Prioritisation

If further controls or actions are required then they may need to be prioritised. In determining priorities, think about the biggest or most serious risks first. You will need to consider such issues as:

- long-term solutions to those risks with the worst potential consequences
- long-term solutions to those risks most likely to cause accidents or ill-health
- the number of people who may be affected by the risk
- whether it is safe to start work, or allow work to continue before the additional controls are introduced

- whether there are improvements that can be implemented quickly, even as a temporary solution until more reliable controls are in place
- the cost of implementation and availability of resources
- the complexity of the controls required

The greater the risk the more robust and reliable the control measures will need to be.

There are a variety of **risk evaluation tools** which can be used to help determine if further action is required, including risk matrices. It is not mandatory to use an evaluation or scoring system, and it is probably not necessary for a low risk environment where there are well-established management standards that should be adopted. However a risk matrix may help with decision making when faced with more complex situations. See Appendix 2 for an example of a risk matrix that can be used..

8 RECORD THE FINDINGS

The University has two forms which are available for recording the outcome of the general risk assessment process, the RA1 and RA2 forms. Schools and Services may use their own versions of forms as long as they have been agreed with H&S Services.

RA1 Form – Area Risk Assessment Form

This form can be used for fairly simple assessment where the activity or area gives rise to a number of different, but fairly straightforward hazards, and the amount of detail required is limited. A blank form can be found on the H&SS website under Forms.

Guidance:

The RA1 form can be used for generic risk assessments of offices, workshops, laboratories and communal areas. Guidance on typical office hazards is given in Appendix 3.

It is not necessary to evaluate straightforward risks in terms of High/Medium/Low. However if this helps with decision making and prioritisation, a simple risk matrix is given in Appendix 2.

RA2 Project/ Activity Risk Assessment Form

This is a more comprehensive form more suited to more complex or higher risk tasks or projects when you wish to consider an activity or piece of equipment in detail. A blank copy of an RA2 form can be found on the H&SS website under Forms. Where an activity involves the use of chemicals the laboratory COSHH and risk assessment form should be used.

Associated with the RA2 form is a more sophisticated risk matrix. It is not mandatory that this is used, but it may help with decision making and prioritisation.

Guidance:

You are not required to send copies of individual risk assessments to Health & Safety Services. Where you are unsure if your risk assessment is suitable, or where you are dealing with complex, higher risk activities, we are happy to give feedback, and to contribute to risk assessment reviews.

Risk assessments should be kept for at least 3 years. This is so that, in the event of a civil claim being made against the University, we will be in a position to demonstrate, retrospectively, that risks were properly assessed. Note that specific legislation may require the records to be kept for much longer, for example genetic modification risk assessments must be kept for at least 10 years after the activity has ceased.

8.1 Log of Risk Assessments

To help understand the risk profile or to keep a record of what activities, projects or work areas have been assessed, when these need to be reviewed, and to facilitate auditing, a Log of Risk Assessments may be completed for each School/Service/Department. This is particularly recommended for Schools/Services which have more than office or travel activity. A Risk Assessment Log form is available on the H&SS web site.

It is recommended that the risk assessment log is maintained by the Area Health & Safety Co-ordinator and/or manager, and made available to the Head of School / Service.

8.2 Use of generic risk assessments

Generic risk assessments can have their uses, but where they are used, the risk assessment should be checked to ensure that it adequately addresses the area or task being considered. Where necessary, it must be added to or amended so that it reflects the local situation.

Guidance:

Appendix 3 lists generic hazards and controls for an office. However, it cannot cover every hazard or control for every office in the University and therefore, it is expected that some office risk assessments should be tailored to reflect local circumstances e.g. a need to refresh training for first aiders, fire wardens etc.; local procedures for lone working or for accessing remote areas of the building such as the basement; or to add specific local hazards such as no-go areas for children.

8.3 Communication

The results of risk assessments must be communicated with all necessary groups or individuals so that they understand what they have to do to work safely. Communication can take a variety of forms, provided it is effective in conveying to people what they need to do to comply with controls that have been identified.

Guidance:

This does not mean that the whole risk assessment needs to be seen by everyone. In some cases this would be appropriate, but it may be more relevant to give instructions on how to comply with the necessary controls. Examples of different methods of communication include:

- Generic information in the Area Health & Safety Code or Local Rules
- Signage e.g. how to evacuate the building; signage where PPE is mandatory, for example eye protection when using a lathe
- A written Safe System of Work or Standard Operating Procedure that communicates the control measures through a series of detailed instructions e.g. how to carry out a flavour testing session with outside participants using the sensory booths; how to use a centrifuge in a laboratory.
- Tool box talks, staff briefings, induction training.

8.4 Action plans and review

Having undertaken the risk assessment it is necessary to ensure that all necessary controls are implemented effectively and that the assessments are reviewed on a regular basis.

Where your risk assessment has placed an action on people, these should be included in, or referenced, in your overall action plan for health and safety. The action plan should be documented and reviewed on a regular basis (see Safety Code of Practice 2).

8.5 Reviewing risk assessments

Risk assessments should be reviewed regularly and modified if necessary. They should not be a once-and-for-all activity, but equally, they do not have to be re-written every year. As the nature of work changes and our appreciation of hazards and risks develops over time, so risk assessments should evolve.

Assessments should be reviewed:

- If significant changes are made to existing workplaces, work activities, projects, equipment, or materials/substances in use, such that the original assessments are no longer valid.
- If new or temporary members of staff are employed who may be more at risk due to inexperience, age or physical or mental health conditions and disabilities.
- If female staff announce that they are pregnant, and their work could give rise to a health risk to the mother or unborn child.
- If new legislation / guidance / codes of practice or national standards are introduced.
- Following workplace inspections, accidents or near misses which highlight deficiencies in existing risk control measures or previously unforeseen hazards.
- AND on a regular basis – every 12 months is recommended (although every 2 years would be acceptable for low risk administrative departments).

9 FURTHER ADVICE AND INFORMATION

The Health and Safety Executive have useful guidance documents on completing risk assessments for specific subject/operational areas. See www.hse.gov.uk.

You can contact your Area health and Safety Co-ordinator or Health and Safety Services for specific advice.

Appendix 1: Who should carry out risk assessments?

The table below is a guide to the areas of work which require risk assessments and who might be expected to carry out the assessment. This is not a definitive guide, and there may be areas of work missing or a more suitable person to carry out the assessment. Local School/Service management are responsible for deciding where risk assessments are required, and who should do them.

Area or type of work	Recommended Person allocated responsibility for ensuring risk assessments are carried out (<i>they may delegate the actual task</i>)	Forms
Laboratory areas	Nominated person for the laboratory e.g. lab manager or Area H&S Coordinator	Lab RA form for a general assessment of the laboratory
Teaching practical	Specified academic in charge of practical Technical staff may need to prepare risk assessments for setting up practicals	Depending on the nature of the practical class and likely hazards: Lab COSHH form; BioRA form; or RA2 form.
Research activities/projects	Research supervisor or principal investigator	Depending on the nature of the research and likely hazards: Lab COSHH form; BioRA form; or RA2 form.
Work with sources of ionising radiation	Research supervisor or principal investigator – overseen by School Radiation Protection Supervisor. Approval by Radiation Safety Sub Committee required prior to work commencing	Ionising RA forms (IRRA) Open sources Sealed sources
Work with lasers	Research supervisor or principal investigator – overseen by School Laser Supervisor. Approval by Radiation Safety Sub Committee required prior to work commencing	Laser RA form
Work with Genetically Modified Organisms	GM Project Supervisor. Approval by Sub-Committee for Biological Safety required prior to work commencing	GM Project proposal and risk assessment form
Work with Biological agents or biological material	Research supervisor or principal investigator Note: approval by Sub-Committee for Biological Safety is required prior to work commencing, for medium and high risk projects e.g. Hazard Group 2 agents, work with medium-high risk cell cultures or human samples. See Safety Code of Practice 14 for more information on project approval processes.	Biological Agent Risk Assessment Form (BioRA form)
Work with chemicals or other hazardous substances	Research supervisor or principal investigator	CRA1 form for working with single substances; Lab COSHH form for processes
Work with dangerous substances (DSEAR)	Research supervisor or principal investigator	No specific form – cover in the Lab RA form for general activities (e.g. storage of flammables etc). Use the CRA1 form for specific projects.
Research involving human intervention and clinical trials	Research supervisor or principal investigator	RA2 form

Area or type of work	Recommended Person allocated responsibility for ensuring risk assessments are carried out (<i>they may delegate the actual task</i>)	Forms
Preparation of food for human consumption	Research supervisor or principal investigator	RA1 for general safety issues; HACCP for food safety & hygiene risks
Central teaching areas (e.g. seminar / lecture theatres)	Nominated person, Campus Services, Estates and Facilities	RA1
Administrative/ office areas and other low risk work	Manager / supervisor	RA1
Workshops, store rooms etc	Workshop supervisor, Stores Manager, Chief Technician	RA1
Common areas within departments (e.g. meeting rooms, corridors with departmental access only)	Senior Administrative Officer/ Area Health & Safety Co-ordinator/ Building Manager	RA1
Student/staff activities off site (e.g. organised visits and field work)	Academic in charge (Fieldwork Supervisor)	RA1
Students on placements	Academic in charge (Placement Organiser) must assess the suitability (including health and safety) of the placement and ensure a risk assessment of the work of the student is undertaken by the organisation providing the placement.	Online micro-site
Catering facilities	Manager	RA1 for general safety issues; HACCP for food safety & hygiene risks
Events, open days, school visit etc.	Event Organiser in consultation with Event Safety Controller	Event Risk assessment
Student projects	It may be appropriate for students to undertake a risk assessment of their own project work, but this must be checked by a competent person, normally the academic responsible for the course or activity.	RA1 (modified as required)
Overseas travel	The person undertaking the travel	Compliance with generic university overseas travel risk assessment controls or where controls cannot be complied with or high risk destination – an overseas travel risk assessment should be completed. See checklists for overseas travel on H&SS web site.

Appendix 2: Appendix 2 Risk matrix for low risk work environments

Ratings can be assessed before and after controls have been identified, in order to assess how effective the controls are or might be in reducing risk, and to assist with action planning and prioritisation.

Severity	<p>Medium</p> <p>High impact e.g. serious injury, or multiple persons suffering harm</p> <p>Low probability e.g. has not happened in the last 3 years</p>	<p>High</p> <p>High impact e.g. serious injury, or multiple persons suffering some harm</p> <p>High probability e.g. Has happened several times in the last year</p>
	<p>Low</p> <p>Low impact Minor injuries only, few people affected</p> <p>Low probability e.g. has not happened in the last 3 years</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Low impact Minor injuries only, few people affected</p> <p>High probability e.g. Has happened several times in the last year</p>
	Probability	

Guidance:
A more sophisticated risk matrix which can be used to evaluate more complex or high risk activities is given in the RA2 form, available on the H&SS web site under Forms.

Appendix 3: Appendix 3 Typical hazards in low risk work environments, and controls required

Typical hazards found in University offices, and controls that should already be in place to manage them

1. Slips and trips e.g. carpets/ rugs, cables, spilt water.
 - Ad hoc housekeeping of all areas is undertaken by staff
 - All work areas, including store rooms/cupboards are inspected termly and deficiencies are followed up by the AHSC
 - Cables are stored tidily and do not trail
 - All areas are well lit
 - Staff store any deliveries straight away and keep circulation spaces clear of boxes
 - Staff mop up spillages straight away
 - Blue towel is provided for mopping spillages up
 - Non slip matting is provided near water dispenser
 - Staff have been briefed to hold the handrail when using the stairs.
 - Additional controls that may be required:
 - Loose carpets that could cause a slip/trip hazard are not allowed unless they are well secured to the floor at the edges (double sided tape etc)
 - A WREN is raised for damaged carpets that could cause a trip hazard
2. Fire
 - The fire alarm in this building is tested onday atam/pm by.....
 - Only oil filled radiators are used where additional heating is required
 - Any fire issues are to be notified to x (manager) and where relevant x (building manager)
 - Combustible substances or wastes are stored safely (e.g. in an external store)
 - Staff are made aware of the fire evacuation procedures and fire prevention during their induction to the department
 - Staff are instructed to switch off electrical appliances when leaving at the end of the working day
 - All (new) staff are required to watch the fire safety video available online
 - Termly fire safety checklists are completed by the Building Manager and returned to H&SS.
 - Actions arising for the building fire risk assessment or termly checklists are followed up by the Building Manager.
 - Additional controls that may be required:
 - Refresher training for fire warden staff required – to be organised with H&SS by X
 - Evacuation chair operatives need to be identified and trained - to be organised with H&SS by X
 - Nominated staff need training in how to operate the evacuation lift - to be organised with H&SS by X
3. Manual handling – A4 paper boxes, display equipment
 - Trolley is used to move heavy items where possible
 - Heavy items are stored accessibly/ at a suitable height, not above head height and not on the floor (if they are needed regularly)
 - Staff are aware/ trained of how to split heavy items to make them easier to handle
 - Porter/contractor used to move heavier items/ carry out x task
 - Where possible, staff use the lift to move materials between floors. If they have to carry materials (boxes etc) between floors, they ask a colleague to help if necessary

- If lifting and carrying is a routine occurrence, staff have to attend training in correct lifting techniques (available through H&S Services)
 - Additional controls that may be required:
 - Alternative arrangements need to be made for the moving of X
 - Store room needs to be re-organised to stop items being stored on the floor – install additional shelving
- 4. Working at height – step ladders, kick stools, mobile access steps**
- Appropriate step ladder and/or footstools are available for use if necessary
 - Stable platforms available for staff to store items on high shelves
 - Regular inspection (freq.) carried out by X
 - Additional controls that may be required:
 - New staff shown how to use the safe access equipment by X
- 5. Health of workers - environmental conditions, work related stress**
- Occupational health management referral process is available to managers
 - Staff have regular 1-2-1 meetings where issues such as their responsibilities, duties and workload can be discussed
 - Stress survey has been carried out in dd/yy and all recommendations are being acted upon. Review in 3 months time by X
 - Managers or HR are available for staff to discuss confidential issues
 - Information is communicated to staff by team meetings and email
 - Specific risk assessments have been carried out where necessary for maternity/young workers/vulnerable workers
- 6. Use of Display Screen Equipment and computer workstations**
- The DSE assessors for this area are XX
 - All staff have completed an on-line DSEasy assessment
 - Assessors have moderated the results of the online assessment completed by staff and where appropriate the necessary actions have been taken and the assessment has been closed
 - Work is planned to include change of activity or regular breaks
 - Eye tests for DSE users are offered on request and are paid for
 - Basic spectacles are paid for or an allowance made (£55 allowance) where optician states they are required on the eyesight test request form
 - Additional controls that may be required:
 - There are staff who have been put on the system who have yet to complete their DSEasy assessment, the next step is to ask their line manager to remind them of the need to complete the assessment so that they will not experience any health issues due to poor ergonomics
 - New staff will be notified to the DSE assessor by the line manager within 1 week of them starting.
- 7. Electrical equipment and Computers, laptops and similar equipment e.g. heaters, fans**
- Staff are encouraged to spot and report any defective plugs, discoloured sockets or damaged cable/equipment, and take it out of use
 - Electrical equipment is tested as required. This is organised annually in MONTH by X
- 8. Use of work equipment**
- All new equipment is checked before first use to ensure there are no obvious accessible dangerous moving parts or its location in the office does not cause additional hazards

- Staff are trained in use of the equipment where necessary (photocopier, shredder)

9. Defective equipment is taken out of use safely and promptly repaired/replaced

10. Lone working

- Staff leave a contact number and location (in their outlook diary/ on office whiteboard/ with administrative staff) if they leave the office or go off campus for a period of time
- If the risk is assessed as high, additional measures may be needed e.g. phone call to confirm visit has been completed safely, have a buddy, make alternative arrangements for a place to meet
- If travelling abroad a university on-line insurance form is completed and contact details and itinerary are copied to X

11. Vulnerable works (including under 18's, disabled or pregnant workers)

- Where necessary a personal evacuation plan will be implemented. This will be done by X
- When a work experience student starts the person supervising will assess the risks for that individual student
- An individual risk assessment will be completed for new or expectant mothers by X. Where necessary working conditions will be altered to reduce any risks
- Additional controls that may be required:
- Rest room facilities for vulnerable workers including nursing mothers need to be identified

12. Other hazards

- Add as required to take account of local circumstances e.g. access to remote storage areas, basements etc.

Appendix 4: Version control

VERSION	KEEPER	REVIEWED	APPROVED BY	APPROVAL DATE
1	H&S	Every four years	John Kibblewhite	November 2000
2	H&S	-	Helen Toll	May 2004
3	H&S	-	Moira Simpson	December 2013