Health and Safety Services

WELLBEING, SAFETY AND HEALTH

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Risk Assessment

Standard

Introduction:

To manage health and safety in the workplace, we need to control the risks. To do this, we think about what might cause harm to people and how to take reasonable steps to prevent this occurring. This is known as risk assessment. It is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying hazards, deciding if they can cause harm, and if so putting in place sensible measures to control the risks.

Definitions:

Risk assessment - a systematic process of evaluating whether all the elements of an activity to be carried out poses a risk. By following a step process you can identify the hazards that are present, whether those hazards actually pose a risk and if they do, identify the control measures required to protect people.

Documented risk assessment - paper or electronic copies of the risk assessment (including those saved on the RIVO electronic risk assessment system).

Hazard - anything with the potential to cause harm. (e.g. harmful substances, damaged floor, work equipment).

Risk – is a combination of the likelihood (i.e. the chance of it happening) and the severity (i.e the potential outcome) that something will have a negative impact.

Risk matrix – part of the risk assessment form which helps people to decide on the actual level of risk for their activity/ environment/ process.

Significant risk - anything identified as moderate (that can be reasonably reduced) and all high or unacceptable risk in the health and safety risk matrix (part of the central risk assessment form) – i.e. it has the potential to cause harm.

Control or control measure - an item or action that will remove or reduce the risk (e.g. guard on a machine, substitution of a less harmful chemical, providing training or instruction, regular maintenance undertaken on a piece of work equipment).

Hierarchy of control - a method of prioritising that is used to remove or manage the risks to as low a level as possible. These include eliminating, substituting, using engineering controls, using administrative controls and finally using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Standard:

The University takes a management approach based on the adequate control of the risks and expects that:

- The 5 steps to risk assessment process are followed.
- All hazards associated with work or academic activities are identified.
- Where these hazards (including hazards to health) have the potential to cause harm, documented risk assessments which include the identified control measures are in place and held locally.
- Control measures identified in the risk assessments are prioritised, implemented, communicated and monitored for effectiveness.
- The risk assessment form attached to this protocol is the minimum standard required.
- Each school/ service creates and maintains an up-to-date risk assessment log.
- Risk assessment is carried out by competent people using their expertise with the involvement of people who understand the activities/ processes being undertaken.
- Risk assessments are approved by a line manager or academic tutor.
- Information, instruction and training is provided to all people involved in the risk assessment process;
- Professional advice is sought for complex/ technical areas of risk assessments.
- Where premises or activities are shared with other organisations/ individuals, systems are in place to ensure cooperation and coordination, define responsibilities and control risks.
- Risk assessments are reviewed regularly, and immediately if the people, processes or activities change or if an accident or near miss occurs.

Relevant legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work etc, Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended) (MHSWR).