



Management of Risk Assessment

Guidance for Heads of School/ Service

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PRSG27.2		WELLBEING, SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM					
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Introduction

This guidance is for Heads of School/ Service and explains your role as part of the management process of implementing the Standard. Your line managers and academic tutors will be most involved in writing and approving risk assessments but all staff and students should be involved in the creation of risk assessments. Training courses are available at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/safety/training/index.htm> and guidance is always available from your Health and Safety Manager.

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).

Roles and actions

The health and safety responsibilities of staff, students or visiting personnel are set out in the University Health and Safety Policy (<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/safety/policy.htm>).

Line managers/ academic tutors

- Follow the risk assessment process or lead it where you are the most competent person
- Keep documented risk assessments locally
- Approve the risk assessment
- Check that staff and students in your remit have training in understanding the risk assessment process
- Review risk assessments

Health and Safety Managers

- Offer professional guidance and advice on the risk assessment process

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Health and Safety Coordinators

- Offer advice and support to line managers, academic tutors, staff and students with the risk assessment process
- Go to risk assessment training

Staff and students

- Follow the risk assessment process – and particularly any control measures
- Know where the documented risk assessments are kept

Guidance

• Process for risk assessment

You as Head of School/ Service should assure yourself that your staff and students know to follow a simple approach to risk assessment:

- Identify the hazards,
- Decide who might be harmed and how,
- Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions,
- Record your findings and implement the control measures,
- Review your assessment and update as necessary and after significant change, accident or incident.

• Identify hazards associated with work or academic activities

As Head of School/ Service you should check that a system is in place to identify hazards. There are a number of methods that your staff / students can use to help them identify hazards such as;

- using the findings of previous risk assessments
- discussing with staff and students
- analysing incident and near miss data (often found in Sentinel)
- benchmarking against other areas with similar hazards
- seeking advice from health and safety professionals / technical experts

• Documented risk assessments

Next, the system in place needs to assess whether these hazards have the potential to cause harm. If so they must be included in a documented risk assessment. There are various kinds of risk assessment, many of which are covered under specific protocols, but the list below gives a brief overview:

- A general or activity risk assessment – covers an activity including a number of different hazards (e.g. office or research project risk assessment).
- A specific risk assessment – may be about one key hazard (e.g. manual handling, Legionella, fire safety, machinery etc.).
- COSHH risk assessment – can look at a group of hazardous substances or individual chemicals, and the research/ study activities around them.
- An individual risk assessment - for an individual member of staff/ student who has a personal health condition that means they may need extra support or control measures.
- A new or expectant mother risk assessment – for staff/ students who inform their line manager / academic tutor that they are pregnant.
- A young people (those under the age of 18) risk assessment – for those who carry out lots of work-based manual handling.
- Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment – assessing the workstation and computer set up.

Your staff and students should keep the documented risk assessments locally, along with any information on control measures (e.g. safe systems of work, safe operating procedures, local processes, local rules, method statements etc). The risk assessment can either be a paper copy or kept on the electronic risk assessment system RIVO so long as they are accessible. The documented risk assessment must always include any identified control measures.

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- **Control measures**

As Head of School/ Service you should check that a system is in place in your area to ensure that the control measures identified in the risk assessment are prioritised, implemented and communicated to those that could be harmed (this includes staff, student, contractors and visitors) and that these adequately control the risks. This checking of the control measures is often done as part of the formal inspection process, accident/ near miss investigations and issues raised individually by staff or students.

- **Risk assessment form**

You should assure yourself that your staff / students know to use a risk assessment form which is at least as effective as the form attached to this protocol. This includes the:

- title,
- date,
- name of the assessor,
- signature of approver (line manager/ academic tutor responsible),
- location,
- details of activity,
- review date,
- list of hazards,
- people at risk,
- possible outcome/ harm,
- risk ratings before control measures,
- existing control measures,
- risk rating after current controls,
- further control measures required and risk rating after additional control measures,
- communication methods to staff who may be affected by the activity/ process/ substance.

Where a specific risk assessment form is identified as necessary in the Standard of another protocol (e.g. fire safety, fieldwork, placements, biological safety etc.) this must be used instead.

In addition to these items, there are several elements which the risk assessment may also include, depending on the situation/ activity/ individual:

- Any known health hazards associated with the work being carried out,
- if any known workplace exposure limit levels would apply (e.g. chemicals, fumes, dust etc which could have a harmful effect on health – see the HSE’s specific list for more details at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/eh40.htm),
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including any respiratory protective equipment – storage, cleaning, maintenance and inspection,
- Emergency plans (e.g spillages, power outages, shutdown if a fire alarm goes off, floods etc.).

- **Log of risk assessments**

If people in your area are using the electronic risk assessment system (RIVO) to create and save their risk assessments, this will automatically create a risk assessment log. If they are producing paper documents they will also need to produce a list of risk assessments, which as a minimum would contain the document reference (title/ number/ name), dates the risk assessment was carried out, the date it will be reviewed and who owns it.

- **Who carries out the risk assessment**

You should be confident that there is a system in place in your school/ service whereby the risk assessment process is led by a competent person (i.e. the person/ people who have the most knowledge, experience and technical expertise in that area). The risk assessment process should also include people who are carrying out the work and will be able to offer insights into how to keep everyone safe from harm. If more advice is required, contact your Health and Safety Manager.

- **Approval of risk assessments**

Every risk assessment in your area must be approved by a line manager or academic tutor. You should check that these staff/ students understand and carry out this role. If they are not confident to do this, information on training and/ or help and advice is available from Health and Safety Managers or Health and Safety Coordinators.

- **Information, instruction and communication**

You should assure yourself that your staff and students are provided (through the line management structure) with enough information, instruction and training to ensure they:

- understand what they must do,
- which control measures they should take and when,
- the requirements of any safety processes/ rules relating to their academic activities,
- what to do in the event of an emergency
- who to contact if they have any concerns about health and safety.

This is often included in local induction, local lab rules, risk assessment training sessions and one-to-one briefing sessions. Your Health and Safety Manager can offer advice on this and University training on risk assessment is available –more details at www.leeds.ac.uk/safety.

Trade union safety reps are a key part of the consultation process in the development of new and refreshed protocols. They are also a valuable source of knowledge and are often involved in the process of developing local risk assessments.

- **Professional advice**

You should also be assured that your staff and students know who to contact to gain support and advice to complete risk assessments. This advice can come from local technical experts, Health and Safety Coordinators or Managers, Fire Safety Managers, Biological Safety Managers depending on the activity. Your Health and Safety Manager can also advise further on complex/ technical areas.

- **Shared premises/ space with other organisations/ individuals**

There are many areas of the University that share both staff and premises (e.g. the NHS or other organisations). You should check that you have a system in place where your staff and students are clear about which health and safety processes, risk assessments and control measures they should follow. All staff and students from the different organisations involved should also be aware of the findings of these risk assessments, particularly any control measures.

- **Review of risk assessments**

Your school/ service should have defined the review periods for risk assessment in your area. Reviews need to be carried out regularly – the frequency will depend on the level of risk involved and could range from six-monthly to every three years. However, if the people, process or activities involved change, or if an accident / near miss occurs, the risk assessment must be reviewed immediately. This should be included in your school/ service's local arrangements.

For further advice, support or guidance please contact your Health and Safety Manager.

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