UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Risk assessment

Guidance

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Introduction

Risk assessments are central to managing health and safety in the University, and this guidance provides practical information on how to carry out risk assessments and risk assessment logs.

A risk assessment can help you organise and manage risks in three stages:

1. Identifying underlining hazards
2. logically determining the risk of harm
3. Considering what could be done to reduce or eliminate that risk

A main principle of risk assessments is they should take place before any changes are made. Risks should be assessed and control measures put into action before new work is introduced or systems are changed. The process should influence budgets and allocation of resources, rather than being an afterthought when the decisions have already been made.

Risk assessment overview

Whose responsibility is it to manage the risk assessment process?
The regulation of tasks in schools and services means mainly managers are responsible for ensuring risk assessments are in place. They must ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out and regularly reviewed, and that records are kept for work in their areas of responsibility.

Risk assessment tasks may be delegated as long as the risk assessor is competent.

What should be risk assessed?
Risk assessments must be carried out for all work that includes significant risks. Trivial risks can be ignored. You can learn more about what risks to assess later in this guidance.

How often should the assessment be reviewed?
Risk assessments must be reviewed regularly:

- Every two years as a minimum
- Immediately following a serious incident or where there is reason to suspect it is no longer valid.

What should be recorded?
The process does not have to be complex or sophisticated, but significant findings must be recorded. Written assessments recognise the fact that risks exist, and identify appropriate control measures. This is a basis for making work safer and provides evidence of any steps taken.

Which form should I use?
The corporate risk assessment form is the minimum standard required, but several other forms are available for more specific risks. Recording and presenting assessments in this consistent format is beneficial as they can be compared easily,

and as assessments produced by different assessors are in the same format, this makes the interpretation of findings more straightforward. You can learn more about forms later in this guidance.

Protective and preventative measures

Control measures can be preventative (to prevent the hazard arising in the first place) or protective (to protect employees from existing hazards). Of course, measures identified in the risk assessment must be put into action if the process is to have any value.

Risk assessments can produce a number of possible control measures but the final decision is a trade off between the level of risk , cost and the time and effort of applying the control. It is crucial to choose and implement the most appropriate method of risk control.

The choice of control should be guided by the hierarchy of risk control principles:

1. Elimination
2. Substitution
3. Isolation
4. Reduction
5. Information, instruction, training and supervision
6. Personal protective equipment.

Where more than one option is available for a similar degree of risk control, consider which is the most cost effective option. You can find more information about the hierarchy of risk control later in this guidance.

In the event of an accident or incident, the relevant risk assessments will be scrutinised. Failure to implement control measures without adequate documented justification (or failure to ensure that risk assessments are carried out at all) could be highlighted as a potential contributory factor in the incident.

If the risk assessor is not the manager, it is still the manager's responsibility to take decisions based on the findings of the assessments and to implement those decisions.

Who can carry out a risk assessment?

The University will provide training for staff carrying out risk assessments - the type of training will depend on the complexity of the risk assessments.

To untrained or inexperienced managers, undertaking risk assessments can lead to confusion, and even fear of health and safety matters. This is why only a "competent person" should carry out the assessments.

A competent person is someone who has knowledge of the:

- Work involved through personal experience
- Principles of risk assessments and preventing risks
- Specific subject under assessment, through training for example

Risk assessor courses are currently provided centrally, and managers who have passed this course should be competent to carry out a basic risk assessment. Additional professional advice is available from health and safety services for the more complex and technical areas of risk assessment such as electricity, noise and vibrations.

Job-specific health and safety competency

On some occasions, health and safety skill is an integral part of the role. Additional health and safety training is required where the job involves:

- Specific technical and health and safety input
- Reviewing other peoples risk assessments

Risk assessment log

Each faculty, school or service should create and maintain an up-to-date risk assessment log. This is a central record of all the risk assessments carried out, and you can see an example of the risk assessment log in Appendix 2

The purpose of the risk assessment log is to enable information to be exchanged within schools and across the University, avoiding duplication of effort and creating consistency. The log will also:

- Identify common assessments, allowing best practice to be shared through a consistent approach and easy exchange of information
- Highlight areas that still require assessment
- Highlight assessments that are due for review
- Track outstanding actions arising from the risk assessment
- Target key areas for audit
- Provide an effective monitoring tool for senior management

Starting the risk assessment

Remember, risk assessments must be carried out and the appropriate control measures put in place before any new activity, task or process starts, and before any changes to existing working practices, equipment or personnel are implemented.

Which form should I use?
In order to keep consistency across the University and within schools and services, the form for recording assessments has been agreed as a minimum standard. If this form is filled in correctly, the assessment will meet the legislative requirements of being "suitable and sufficient".
The form should be used for all risk assessments except for the following where other specific forms are available.

- Fire
- Display screen equipment
- Manual handling
- Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH)
- First aid
- Field trips
- Genetic modification
- Ionising Radiation
- Lasers
- Lone working
- Pregnant workers

Some of these specific risks may be included in a general risk assessment, for example manual handling and fire may be identified in a general office risk assessment.

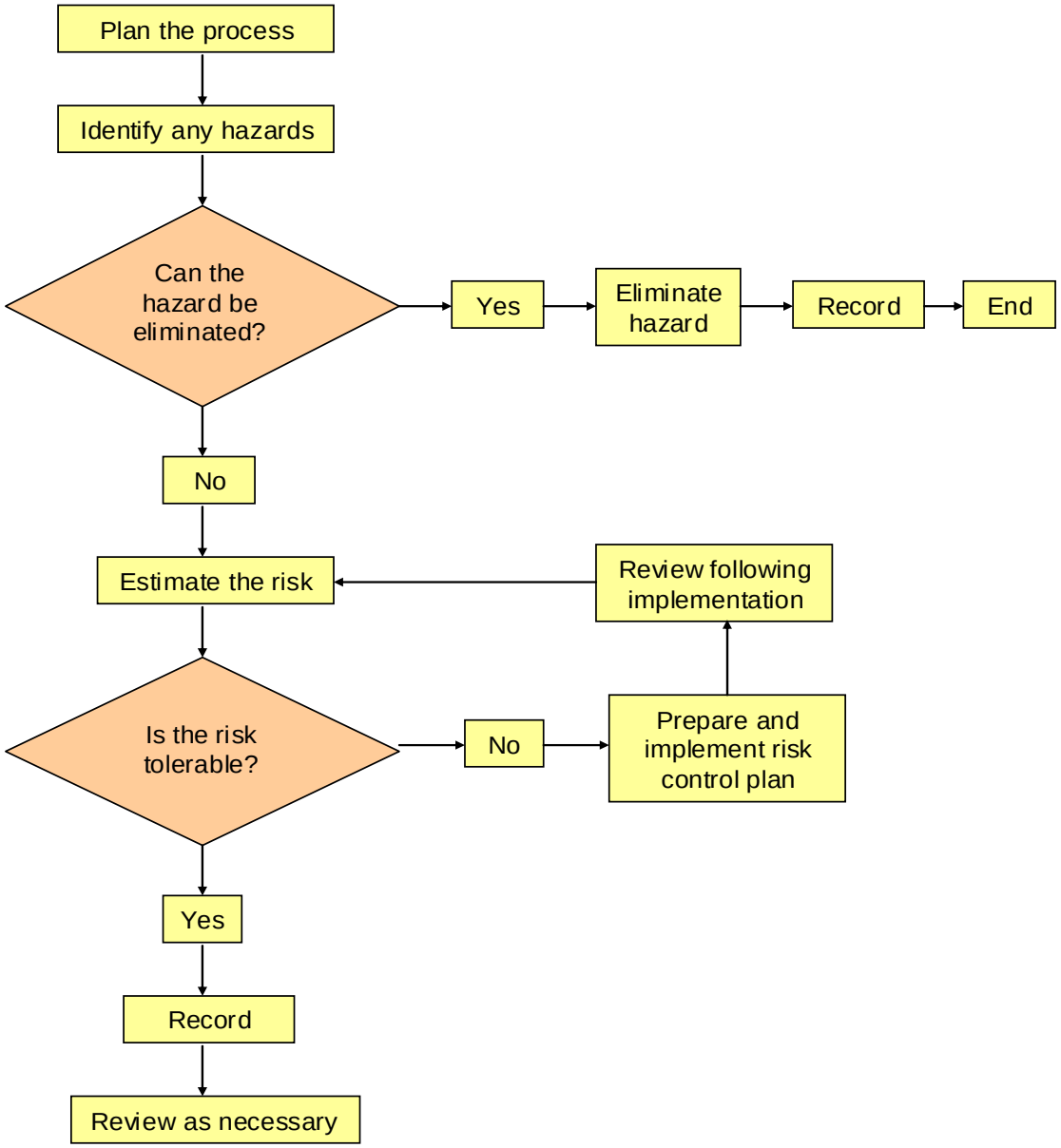
Blank risk assessment forms are available in paper format and electronically from health and safety services. You can also download the blank risk assessment form from Appendix 1

Planning the risk assessment process
When planning the process for risk assessments, consider the following points:

- Is the risk assessor competent?
- Is there any activity-specific or technical information that could help with the assessment? If you are not sure, contact health and safety services who have access to all legislation and various best practices guides and British Standards. These documents can be emailed or sent by hard copy.
- Is there a team that carries out similar activities, and who have already done an assessment? - check the risk assessment log.
- Is there a generic assessment that could be modified to be specific to your service area? Now a corporate risk assessment form has been agreed, a bank of new generic risk assessments will be posted on the website (with the managers' permission). This will avoid reinventing the wheel and also enable best practice to be shared.
- Has the accident / incident reporting system been analysed to identify significant risks?

A good risk assessment will have input from all the team involved and it is a good idea to include health and safety representatives (union and non union). In some cases you might need professional help from health and safety services or the occupational health service.

Flowchart of the risk assessment process



What should be risk assessed?

The types of assessment listed below show the diversity of hazards, but this list is not exhaustive. Assessors can select the type of risk assessment that best suits their service or use a combination. Risk assessments can be cross-referenced to avoid replicating information, so an assessment for “aqua-aerobics” would not need to contain all the information in the "running and maintenance of a swimming pool" assessment.

Equipment specific	**Person specific**
• Use of hand tools • Use or maintenance of electrical items • Still saw	• New and expectant mothers • Young workers • Employees with a disability

Hazard specific	**Activity specific**
• Fire or explosion • Electricity • Noise or vibration • Heat or cold • Radiation • Lighting • Vehicle movement • Compressed air • Falling objects • Slippery, uneven or worn floors • Obstructions and projections • Repetitive hand or arm movements • Handling sharps - broken glass, razors • Violence and aggression	• Cash handling • Events • Educational visits • Organised trips • Minibuses • Working at heights - eg. Using ladders • Reception duties • Cleaning • Office moves • Fieldwork

Job specific	**Building or environment specific**
• Lecturer • Bar attendant • Porter • Cleaner	• Swimming pool • Out of hours working • Office • Studio • Workshop • Laboratory • Confined spaces • Room by room assessments • Personal safety, security, lone working
Process Specific • Collection of waste • Use of dyeing machine • Use of oven	

Combination

- A kitchen risk assessment could include: knives, hot water, steam, regeneration ovens, microwave ovens, grills, serving counters, water boilers, dishwashing machines (may link in with COSHH), waste disposal units, food mixers and processors, deep fat fryers, ovens, ranges, fan assisted ovens, heated sinks, gravity feed slicing machines, slips, electricity etc.
- A general building assessment could include: asbestos, maintenance of buildings, security, etc.

Legislation and guidance state that you can ignore trivial risks or normal life risks, unless the work activity compounds the risk or significantly alters it.

For example an assessment is not required for normal use of public transport, but is required if people transport large quantities of cash or prescription medicines as part of their job. Similarly loading a dishwasher at home is a normal life risk but loading an industrial machine in the kitchen at the University would be a different proposition.

Observing the activity in action is likely to give a more accurate risk assessment than treating it as a desktop exercise. Managers should also use their knowledge and experience of the staff carrying out the work when assessing them.

The risk assessment process

If you are completing a risk assessment, follow this simple process:

Step 1 - Look for hazards
Step 2 - Decide who might be harmed and how
Step 3 - Analysing the risk
Step 4 - Record the findings and put measures in place to control the risks
Step 5 - Implementing and prioritising action
Step 6 - Communicate the findings to staff

Step 1 - Identifying hazards and related activities

The definition of a hazard is "something that has the potential to cause harm" including ill health, injury, loss of product and/or damage to plant and property.

Examples of hazards	
Violence	Poor housekeeping
Moving parts of machinery	Noise
Work at height	Ejected materials
Pressure systems	Vehicles
Electricity	Low or high temperatures
Poor lighting	Manual handling

Previous incident report forms may highlight some of the specific hazards faced by your work.

Step 2 - Identifying people at risk of harm
Identify groups or people who may be affected.

Examples of people at risk	
Employees	Members of the public
Temporary workers	Tenants
Students	Volunteers
Children	Customers
Shift workers	Cleaners
Contactors	Visitors
Relief workers	

Pay particular attention to vulnerable people

Examples of vulnerable people:	
New or expectant mothers	Young people
Staff or customers with learning difficulties	Inexperienced staff
Staff, customers or visitors with disabilities	Lone workers
Non-English speakers	Students

If the risk assessment is job-specific, use the individual's job title, not their name. This means the assessment is still relevant if the employee leaves the University.

Possible outcomes
How could people be harmed by these risks?

Examples of possible outcomes	
Cuts and abrasions	Personal health problems
Broken or dislocated bones	Absorbing substances
Sprains and strains	Asphyxia
Unconsciousness	Noise injuries
Electrocution	Spinal injuries
Burns	Drowning
Scalds	Crushing or trapping
Flying or falling objects	Contagious disease

Step 3 - Analysing the risk
To help analyse risk, the University uses a matrix scoring system. Numerical scores are given to the severity and likelihood of risks and these scores are multiplied to get a rating for the risk. This means the risk rating is a measure of the likelihood that harm from a particular hazard will occur, taking into account the possible severity of such an occurrence.

Risk = Severity x Likelihood

For the initial risk evaluation, consider the risks identified in the worst case scenario before any controls are applied.

Electricity is a hazard, for example - It can kill but the risk of it doing so in an office environment is low providing the components are insulated, the metal casing is properly earthed and appliances are used correctly and tested.

Severity of the hazard
The severity is expressed in terms of the effect on the person, whether injury or ill health, and ranging from minor injury to death. Factors affecting the severity of the effects include:

- The number of people who may be affected
- Any individuals particularly at risk because of disabilities or medical conditions
- The properties of materials, speeds, heights and weights
- The amount and type of energy involved.

Hazard severity	Definition	Points rating
Very high	Causing multiple deaths and widespread destruction eg. fire, building collapse.	**5**
High	Causing death, serious injury or permanent disability to an individual.	**4**
Moderate	Temporary disability causing injury or disease capable of keeping an individual off work for three days or more and reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995).	**3**
Slight	Minor injury, which would allow the individual to continue work after first aid treatment on site or at a local surgery. The duration of the stoppage or treatment is such that the normal flow of work is not seriously interrupted.	**2**
Nil	Very minor injury, bruise, graze, no risk of disease.	**1**

Likelihood of the risk
The likelihood should be based on the worst case scenario, ranging from a remote possibility to the inevitable. Factors affecting the likelihood include:

- Number of times the situation occurs
- Location of the hazard
- Duration of the exposure
- Environmental conditions
- Competence of the people involved and
- The condition of equipment.

Hazard likelihood	Definition	Points rating
Inevitable	If the work continues as it is, there is almost 100% certainty that an accident will happen, for example: • A broken stair or broken rung on a ladder • Bare, exposed electrical conductors • Unstable stacks of heavy boxes	**5**
Highly likely	Will happen more often than not. Additional factors could precipitate an incident but it is still likely to happen without this additional factor.	**4**
Possible	The accident may occur if additional factors precipitate it, but it is unlikely to happen without them.	**3**
Unlikely	This incident or illness might occur but the probability is low and the risk minimal.	**2**
Remote possibility	There is really no risk present. Only under freak conditions could there be any possibility of an accident or illness. All reasonable precautions have been taken - This should be the normal state of the workplace.	**1**

Risk rating
By multiplying the scores for the severity and likelihood, the risk is given a rating ranging from 1 (no severity and unlikely to happen) to 25 (just waiting to happen with disastrous and wide spread results).

This is a qualitative way to determine the urgency of actions and what priority to act on them. This is not intended to be an objective or scientific process but just helps assessors and managers to prioritise and put in place additional control measures.

Risk Rating Score	Action
1-4	Broadly acceptable - No action required
5-9	Moderate - reduce risks if reasonably practicable
10-15	High Risk - priority action to be undertaken
16-25	Unacceptable -action must be taken IMMEDIATELY

Step 4 - Preventative control measures
Measures to control risks should be fully integrated into procedures, equipment and design of work. This will ensure health and safety requirements are satisfied as well as benefiting the quality of service and output.

An essential part of the assessment is to look at what controls are already in place and judge whether or not they are adequate. For example, do they:

- Meet legal requirements?
- Apply best practice or recognised industry standards? - precautions that are in place should be referenced to the manufacturers manual and approved codes of practice/guidance notes from the Health and Safety Executive. (If unsure contact health and safety services).
- Apply up–to-date technology?
- Reduce risk as necessary?

For many areas of health and safety, best practice guidance documents are available which identify the relevant controls necessary. In this case the relevant publications should be cross referenced in the risk assessment.

The hierarchy of control
Control measures identified by the risk assessment, whether protective or preventative, must be implemented in line with the following hierarchy of control. In many cases a combination of control measures will be needed.

- **Elimination** - is it possible to avoid the risk altogether? (eg. requesting a delivery service to an office instead of reception to prevent staff from manual handling.)
- **Substitution** - change the way you do the work, but take care not to introduce new risks (eg. using a safer chemical).
- **Isolation** - combat risks at the source and prevent access to the hazard (eg. guarding machinery).
- **Reduction** - reduce the number of employees at risk or reduce the extent of exposure.
- Use **information (written procedures, safe systems of work), instruction, training and supervision** - ensure employees understand what they must do and when, how they must do it and what activities are prohibited.
- Use **personal protective equipment**, but only as the last resort and only after all other measures have been implemented.

Assessors may need to seek further information or guidance from health and safety services if they are unable to decide whether the risk is adequately controlled or not. **If you think the control measures are insufficient to reduce the risk to an acceptable level, further controls will be required.**

Step 5 - Implementing and prioritising action
Once any control measures have been identified, management must decide what action, if any, to take based on the recommendations. For high risk activities this would include a decision about whether the work should actually take place.

- Where extra measures are needed, establish clear timescales, responsibilities and resources for carrying out the controls. For large events or where a range of measures is required an action plan may be needed, giving further details on the programme for putting the controls into action.
- Where no further measures are needed, documented reasons are required.
- Where it is impossible to put all control measures into action at the time of assessment, adequate steps must be taken in the meantime to minimise risks.

In some cases, managers and staff may not agree on the proposed control measures. If the relevant senior manager is confident the control measures in place are acceptable, they should sign off the risk assessment. In this case the activity should be closely monitored and records of any correspondence should be kept.

If an incident happens that is related to the risk assessment, it is necessary to reassess the risks and put further precautions in place if possible. If the manager is concerned about the level of risk but does not have adequate resources to combat it, the matter should be referred to the dean, director or head of school or service who should sign off the assessment.

Step 6 - Communicating the findings
Information on risks and control measures identified by the risk assessment should be communicated to employees and others as appropriate - Make copies of risk assessments available to all the employees concerned.

The completed risk assessment should provide clear information about hazards, risks and control measures to the employees carrying out the work. Further direction from supervisors may also be required to ensure measures are actually implemented and understood in the context of the particular work and that the measures are effective.

This communication must be understandable by the audience and may require the use of photographs, diagrams or a translator. You could use the information in the following ways:

- Induction training
- Safe systems or work
- Safety procedures
- Hand books
- Team briefings
- Tool box talks
- Supervision meetings or other management meetings
- Specific or general instruction or training sessions
- Hands on training

Information provided to employees and others involved in the work should include:

- The nature and extent of risks, including:
  - Factors that may influence risk
  - Factors that may increase risk

- The control measures to be adopted, including
  - Reasons for the measures
  - How to use them properly
  - What to do and who to contact if things go wrong or change significantly

- The reasons personal protective equipment (PPE) is required
  - Circumstances when PPE is required
  - Limitations of PPE
  - Arrangements for issuing, using, storage and replacing PPE

Monitoring and reviewing

It is a management responsibility to monitor the effectiveness of the measures on an ongoing basis. As part of the assessment process a target date for reviewing the assessment must be set.

Risk rating score	Action	Review recommendation
1 - 4	Broadly acceptable - No action required	Every 1-2 years
5 - 9	Moderate - reduce risks if reasonably practicable	Every 6-12 months
10 -15	High risk - priority action to be undertaken but interim arrangements required immediately	After interim arrangements every 3 months
16 -25	Unacceptable - action must be taken IMMEDIATELY	Immediately

If you consider the risk is controlled to an acceptable level, then once the assessment is recorded, monitor the situation and review it at intervals. Reviewing a risk assessment does not necessarily mean repeating the whole process. If the existing controls in place are still considered adequate, just make a record of that.

However, if the assessment is no longer considered valid then it must be revised by undertaking a further assessment. This should cover the tasks, hazards and groups at risk which the existing control measures are no longer adequate.

The following events could mean an assessment needs reviewing:

- If there is a significant change like a new machine or new work process
- Investigation into an accident
- Information from monitoring incident report forms and absence records
- Results of safety inspections
- New information about the hazards
- Changes to legislation
- Increased number of defects or faults reported
- Departmental restructure
- If it is suspected to be no longer valid.

Dynamic risk assessment

In some cases unexpected or temporary changes may require amendments to be made to control measures - A change in weather conditions for example, or if the heating breaks down.

If these changes happen there is no need to carry out a new assessment, just record any changes on the risk assessment form.

Training identified in the risk assessment

As part of the control measures, the risk assessment will be used to determine the level of instruction and training needed for each activity.

Faculties, schools and services are responsible for:

- Identifying the training needs of their managers and employees, and keeping appropriate records
- Organising suitable training courses where they are not available on a corporate basis.

Training, whether formal or informal, must enable employees to:

- Understand hazards, risks and methods
- Apply control measures
- Use PPE where appropriate
- Implement emergency procedures.

Instruction

In general terms, instruction should ensure employees do not endanger themselves or others through exposure to hazards. Employees should know the following;

- What to do, what precautions to take and when they should take them
- The requirements of any safety procedures relating to their work
- What to do in case of an emergency
- Who to contact if they have concerns about health and safety arrangements.

As part of normal management procedures, records should be kept of elements of instruction given to employees.

Keeping records

The risk assessment forms and any associated documents should be filed for easy retrieval and reference. They should be kept for a minimum of three years after being superseded or after work has stopped, whichever is the earlier. The original signed risk assessment should be kept in the team's health and safety file.

Employee-specific risk assessments such as pregnant workers' assessments and disability risk assessments should be kept on personnel files.

In the event of an incident that results in a medium or high level investigation, the relevant risk assessment should be attached to the sentinel
incident report form before it is sent to health and safety services. They will then be in a position to provide any extra control measures.

Risk assessment - Frequently asked questions

1 - What is the difference between hazard and risk?
A hazard is defined as the potential to cause harm; risk is the likelihood that harm (illness or injury) will actually occur.

2 - How do I know I have identified all the hazards?
It is normally unreasonable to expect one person to identify all the hazards associated with a particular workplace activity. The joint involvement of supervisors and staff is crucial, as often each individual is aware of different aspects of the task and associated hazards. It is important to have an effective system for identifying existing and emerging hazards. Only focus on the hazards which are likely to give rise to significant risks. This may involve:

- Observations from physical inspections of the workplace, equipment and work practices
- Analysis of how activities are performed
- Drawing up or using checklists to act as a prompt
- Referring to generic risk assessments
- Discussions with your safety advisor or safety coordinator
- Studying accident, incident and near miss reports
- Reference to specific legislation

3 - How do I know if the risk is serious or not? How do I rate the risk?
All risk assessments are subjective to some extent.

However, the University does have a preferred model for risk assessments which should enable all staff to work towards a consistent approach. This model will be used in training courses, and will be used in future by health and safety services to produce their generic risk assessments.

The model refers to other rating systems such as a 5 x 5 matrix, which will give numerical assessments of risk. Please note however that there may be cases where low risks can be further reduced by introducing simple additional measures that are not costly.

4 - What should be recorded in the written risk assessment?
All risk assessments should consider and record the following:

- Identification of the hazards
- Determination of who might be harmed and how
- Description of existing controls, and whether these adequately control the risk
- Description of additional steps to take (if necessary), in the form of an action plan
- Measures to be taken if things go wrong – an emergency action plan
- Date of the assessment
- Signatures of assessor(s) and workers involved.

5 - Am I competent to carry out risk assessment? What does 'competent' mean?
A competent person is someone with the skill, knowledge and practical experience of the work activity under consideration. They may also need training or additional information about legal obligations, or the employer's own system of risk assessment.

The competent person need not be an 'expert' but should be aware of their limitations and when to seek help. Contact health and safety services for details of training in risk assessment.

6 - When do I need to do a risk assessment?
Before the activity commences!

Only by completing the assessment before the activity commences can you be sure to consider all the present or potential risks. Only then can suitable control measures be put in place to make the activity safe, and suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) be selected and provided.

7 - Can I use electronic means of recording my risk assessment?
Both paper and electronic means of recording your assessments are acceptable. What is important is that they are given, and if necessary explained, to those involved in the work or activity. You should also comply with your school arrangements for keeping central records of what risk assessments have been done. Electronic copies have the advantage of the template being available off the web, that information is easily inserted or altered and that they can be made more readily available to those who may wish to inspect or audit your records.

8 - Do I have to use the University's forms? What do I do if they don't suit my circumstances?
You don't have to use the University's forms, but if you do you may find that a lot of the foundation work has been already done for you and that the factors to be considered will already be highlighted. You may also find it easier to respond to requests for documents during audit processes.

You are encouraged to use this format but you may need to tailor it to more readily suit your specific requirements and include information that is more appropriate to the task in hand. You can discuss this with your faculty health and safety manager and the safety advisor from your school or service.

However it is a fundamental requirement to include the following:

- The hazards present and their associated risks.
- The significant risks associated with the work / activity.
- Those persons at risk.
- The control measures identified to remove or reduce risk so far as is practicable, (this may include complying with specific ACOPS or other recognised University procedures.

9 - Do I have to transfer all my existing risk assessments onto the new forms?
Throughout the University there are numerous risk assessment formats and methods of recording the outcome from different methods employed by schools and services.

This situation will increase the likelihood of confusion and consequently errors and incidents. This is a greater problem if a school or services uses multiple formats to assess and control risks associated with the same activity, particularly when people move between faculties or campuses.

It is preferable for auditing and reviewing purposes that risk assessments are in a similar format, as this will greatly reduce the time taken to undertake the task and increase accuracy. It is recommended that a common format of risk assessment is used in each school or service

Where numerous assessments already exist, this transfer may be carried out gradually, following an initial check for duplication of assessments. Where the potential for confusion is identified, these risk assessments must be prioritised for urgent review.

As each assessment is revised and updated, and as new risk assessments are developed, the University risk assessment form should be used wherever possible. This should be completed within a maximum two year time period.

10 - How can I avoid excessive paperwork for one-off or repeated activities?
In some circumstances it is still necessary to carry out a risk assessment, but it may not always be necessary to write down the findings.

For example, a generic risk assessment should be developed for day-to-day activities such as routine manual handling tasks. This particular assessment would take into account typical lifts, the level of training and expertise the individual has, the type of equipment available to them, and length of time and effort involved, any relevant environmental factors such as lighting, steps, etc.

The outcome of such a risk assessment should allow the person to recognise a situation that is beyond their capabilities, and identify when they need assistance, or when a more detailed assessment of the risks is required.

11 - How do I use generic risk assessments?
Generic risk assessments should be used as a starting point for the development of more detailed and specific risk assessments, but can be very helpful for circumstances where the risks are very similar. For example, this could be where repetitive tasks are under taken on a regular basis, for a set of offices or experimental procedures.

They should never be adopted without thinking of how relevant they are to the exact circumstances under consideration, and should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are still relevant.

12 - What is an action plan?
In the context of risk assessment, an action plan defines what should happen to implement the outstanding control measures you have identified in your risk assessment. It will describe what steps need to be taken, by whom, and within what timescale. The person responsible for the risk assessment will use the plan to monitor progress towards adequate control of the risks. For example, the plan might specify a certain level of supervision and monitoring which the principal investigator will need to carry out and record the checks made.

Some action plans will describe a short term programme of work to be carried out before an activity can take place; others may refer to improvements to systems that are basically adequate at the moment, but where there are foreseeable maintenance or upgrades planned over the next few months, or even years.

In a different context, an action plan can refer to emergency situations and describe a contingency plan, or the actions required to deal with situations such as:

- Experiments become super critical
- Chemical spillage
- Fire
- Failure of safety controls
- Significant damage to equipment
- Accident and emergency procedures
- List of authorised people and contact numbers.

13 - How do I decide what controls to use?
The regulations require us to consider types of control in a particular order, called “the hierarchy of controls”. We must start by looking at controls that eliminate the risk altogether (prevention). If we cannot do this, we move on to consider controls that provide collective protection (eg local exhaust ventilation). Only when we have exhausted these options as far as possible, can we move onto controls that protect the individual, such as PPE.
.
The general principles are:

- Avoid the risk altogether by elimination or substitution
- Evaluate the risks which cannot be avoided
- Put suitable preventative measures in place to control these risks, starting with collective measures before considering personal protective measures
- Give appropriate instruction and training to staff about the risks

14 - How far do I need to go to control the risks?
You need to take such steps so that harm from the work will be unlikely, and any specific legal requirements are met (meaning the risks are adequately controlled).

You must identify all the risks, prioritise them, then control them. This means that you have to weigh the costs of controlling the risk against the harm that could result. In other words, where there is a risk of serious injury or death, you need to do more to control that risk than if a minor injury could occur. You may even need to stop the work until you can find a safer way of doing it. This balancing exercise is independent of whether you can afford to control the risks. Otherwise, poorer employers would be able to implement lower standards of protection.

15 - How do I know if the controls are adequate?
For some risks, specific regulations prescribe what you need to do (for example display screen equipment regulations). Complying with these (or with the HSE's approved codes of practice) will ensure adequate control of the risks.

In other cases, there are no specific regulations or approved codes of practice to help us define what is adequate. Here we have to consider things like industry practice, good practice or best practice (this is not necessarily the same as standard or customary practices!). Many industry bodies publish health and safety guidance.

For more assistance, contact the safety advisor in your school or service, your faculty health and safety manager or health and safety services.

16 - How do I make sure the controls are implemented?
This can be done in many ways. The diligence and formality will be governed somewhat by the degree of risk. These checks could take the form of any or all of the following:

- Regular reviews and examination that the identified control measures are being adhered to and that the risk is actually being reduced.
- Use of "permits to work" for high risk activities.
- Regular inspection and monitoring of the activity.
- Individuals being given a copy of the risk assessments.
- Talks, training sessions or research group meetings.
- Suitable and sufficient training to equip staff and students to undertake work activities safely.
- Use of checklists before work commences.
- Use of authorised people (to either sign off a work method or to be present when work is undertaken).
- Suitable degree of supervision
- Spot checks of the activity.
- Investigation of the causes of accidents or incidents and reports of near misses

17 - What do I do if the risk assessment shows that health surveillance might be necessary?
Health surveillance is a legal requirement in certain circumstances. Individuals identified as needing health surveillance must contact the occupational health service who will advise, assist and keep records

18 - What do I do if the controls have to be implemented by others outside my influence?
Where two or more schools or employers share a workplace, each party must co-operate with the others to ensure compliance with relevant health and safety laws. All managers and employers must be informed of any risks to their employees arising out of the undertakings of the other party and the agreement recorded. Control measures that involve others should be coordinated to best effect.

To deal with such situations:
1. Identify the problem and the actions required to control the risks.
2. If the risks have been created by those outside your influence then make sure the other party has considered what control measures are necessary to protect your employees and students
3. Meet to discuss how to implement the control measures
4. Work should not start until the agreed control measures are in place.

19 - What should be done with a completed risk assessment?
You need to make sure everyone who could be affected by the risk is informed about the risk assessment, understands the control measures, and what they need to do to make the controls work effectively. You can do this, for example, by providing them with copies, talking it through in team meeting or tutorials, observing practices and checking that these are consistent with the risk assessment.

Copies of the completed risk assessment should be lodged in the school risk assessment register and kept safely until five or six years after the work has been completed.

20 - How do I tell people about the risk assessment? Who needs to know?
It depends on the circumstances. In the simplest of cases information can be given by word of mouth. More usually it will need to be written down and copies made available. Frequently risk assessments will lead to the production of written 'safe systems of work'. These must be readily available to people engaged in the work.

You need to tell anyone who may be affected by the risks. This includes staff and students, but might also include people like cleaners, estates staff or contractors or carry out maintenance work.

21 - How long do I need to keep a risk assessment?
Most risk assessments should be kept (and kept under review) for as long as they are relevant and relate to a work activity, and then for an additional five or six years. The reason for this is that claims for accidental injury at work can be lodged for up to three years after the injury or effect is diagnosed, which may take some time after the work activity has ceased. Solicitors acting for the injured person and the university will wish to see evidence that the risks were adequately assessed and controlled.

Any assessments involving chemicals that could cause health effects should be kept for 40 years in accordance with the COSHH Regulations. Assessments for work with genetically modified materials should be kept for 10 years.

22 - When do I need to review my risk assessments?
Risk assessment is not a one-off exercise but an ongoing process. It is a legal requirement that all risk assessments be reviewed and, if necessary, modified in the light of changes which take place.

It is good practice to review all risk assessments once a year (or perhaps once every two years, in low risk situations such as in many administrative departments) whether or not you are aware of significant changes.

However, they should also be reviewed in the light of:

- An adverse incident (such as an accident, near miss, ill health, dangerous occurrence, discovery of a defect)
- A change in the legislation or known good practice
- As the appreciation of hazards and risks develops
- Proposed changes to experimental procedures or conditions (including new methods, new equipment)
- Publication of information about changing risks (such as knowledge that a particular substance has been designated a carcinogen)
- Developments suggest it is no longer valid or can be improved
- Change in personnel: to reflect any change in risk due to the age, experience, sex, disability, susceptibility, physical characteristics of the people working with the risk.
- As a result of health surveillance information
- Monitoring of health and safety arrangements

Risk assessments and the controls applied to the risks must remain relevant to the actual activities taking place, not those assessed many years ago!

23 - Why do I need to keep a register of risk assessments?

The University standard on risk assessment places a responsibility on heads of schools and services to establish and maintain a register of all risk assessments. This particularly applies to risk assessments for activities that do not change daily such as manual handling, work at height and using of particular types of equipment. It is recognised that maintaining a register of all risk assessments may be impractical for some activities in certain areas such as chemistry and pharmacy, where COSHH risk assessments are undertaken on a daily basis. Under these circumstances it will be acceptable for these documents to be archived locally in a form which is readily accessible.

- The benefits associated with maintaining a register include:
- Consistency of risk control throughout the School/Administrative Directorate through maintaining a library of generic risk assessments
- Undertaking generic risk assessments which may be co-ordinated and shared between individuals, thus reducing an individual's workload
- It avoids the duplication of effort
- Helpful in managing the review process
- It is used to facilitate efficient monitoring and audit work, and help to establish whether risk assessments have been carried out comprehensively across all school activities.

24 - What do I need to do if the risk assessment is for a young person?

Follow the guidance laid down in the University's code of practice and guidance document on young people.

25 - How should I review my risk assessments if I find out that someone is pregnant, or that they are new mothers or breast-feeding?
If a member of staff advises you that they are pregnant then all risk assessments relating to their daily work need to be reviewed and if necessary new assessments produced. In some instances you will need to change control measures or working arrangements to protect the person and unborn child. The assessment should take into account any medical advice received regarding the health of the employee.

Issues that should be considered include:

- Physical risks including movement, posture, confined spaces, manual handling, shocks and vibration, noise, ionising radiation and non-ionising radiation
- Biological and chemical agents
- Working conditions, facilities, working hours, mental and physical fatigue, stress, smoking, temperature, display screen equipment, lone working, working at height, travel, personal protective equipment.

Risk assessments should also be reviewed for new mothers and mothers who are still breast feeding.

Further guidance is available on the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Health and safety services

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Risk assessment form

General Risk Assessment	Number	Issue	Sheet no	Author Source	Approved by	Signature

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM - SAMPLE

RISK ASSESSMENT DETAILS

Faculty/School/Service	
Team	

Risk Assessment Title	
Risk Assessment Log Reference	
Date	
Name of Assessors	
Manager Responsible	
Location	
Details of Activity	

Other assessments which might also be required, ☑ if needed:

- Manual Handling ☐ REF
- COSHH ☐ REF
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ☐ REF
- Noise ☐ REF
- Other ☐ REF

DEGREE OF RISK

LIKELIHOOD (L)	
5	Inevitable
4	Highly Likely
3	Possible
2	Unlikely
1	Remote Possibility

SEVERITY (S)	
5	Very High -Multiple Deaths
4	High - Death, serious injury, permanent disability
3	Moderate - RIDDOR over 3 days
2	Slight - First Aid treatment
1	Nil - Very Minor

RISK RATING MATRIX

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

PERSONS AT RISK

PERSONS AT RISK
Employees
Students
Clients
Contractors
Members of the public
Work Experience students
Other Persons

REVIEW DATES

RISK RATING SCORE	ACTION
1 - 4	Broadly Acceptable - No action required
5 - 9	Moderate - Reduce risks if reasonably practicable
10 -15	High Risk - Priority Action to be undertaken
16 -25	Unacceptable **-Action must be taken IMMEDIATELY**

HAZARD AND RELATED ACTIVITIES e.g. trip, falling objects, fire, explosion, noise, violence etc.	**PERSONS AT RISK** e.g. Employees, Customers, Contractors, Members of the public	**POSSIBLE OUTCOME**	**RISK RATING BEFORE CONTROLS (LxS)**	**EXISTING CONTROLS** e.g. Guards, Safe Systems of Work, Training, Instruction, Authorised Users, Competent Persons, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	**RISK RATING AFTER CURRENT CONTROLS (LxS)**	**FURTHER CONTROLS REQUIRED?**	**RISK RATING AFTER ADDITIONAL CONTROLS (LxS)**

MANAGEMENT AGREED ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES REQUIRED		ACTIONED BY			ACTION COMPLETE	
		POSITION	NAME	DATE	MANAGER SIG	DATE

COMMUNICATION OF RISK ASSESSMENT FINDINGS TO STAFF				
	METHOD	YES	DATE	COMMENTS
REFERENCE OF FORMAL COMMUNICATION TO STAFF	Copy of risk assessment issued to staff			
	Controls covered in team procedure issued to staff			
	Staff Handbook issued to staff			
	Other -			
ADDITIONAL METHODS OF COMMUNICATION	Induction			
	Toolbox Talk			
	Team Meeting			
	E-mail circulation			
	Other -			

COMMENTS AND INFORMATION (Use this section to record any dynamic risk assessment comments and information)

Do additional controls adequately lower high risk activities to an acceptable level?	**YES / NO** If NO explain in comments box above	**SIGNATURE OF MANAGER** "The risks identified in this assessment are controlled so far as is reasonably practicable"	
		Signature:	Date:

DATE OF REASSESSMENT (Every two years minimum)	**ARE THERE ANY CHANGES TO THE ACTIVITY SINCE THE LAST ASSESSMENT?**	**SIGNATURE OF MANAGER**

LOCATION OF CURRENT SIGNED RISK ASSESSMENT	

Appendix 2

RISK ASSESSMENT LOG - SAMPLE

RISK ASSESSMENT LOG											
Directorate:						Area:					
Section/Team	Risk Assessment Title	Version No.	Risk Assessment Category	Code /Location	Risk Assessor	Manager responsible for signing off risk assessment	Date assessment signed off	Review Due	Review Date	Outstanding Controls/Actions Yes/No	Comments