This guidance is intended to assist Faculties and Professional Service Departments with the undertaking and completion of risk assessments and associated responsibilities in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2006 and the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Managing for Health and Safety (HSG 65) guidance document.

Introduction

An employer has a duty of care to protect its employees and others under Section 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. As a way of exercising this duty of care, the Management of Health and Safety at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2006 and the Health and Safety Executive's HSG65 Managing for Health and Safety document, require suitable and sufficient risk assessments to be completed and communicated appropriately.

A risk assessment enables the management of risk, highlighting where harm may occur and adequately assessing whether reasonable steps or control measures are currently in place. It also assists with the identification of additional risks which may have been previously overlooked.

Risk assessments are not about producing reams of paperwork, but an important exercise ensuring the protection of employees undertaking work-related activities. They should result in an activity to be controlled 'as far as is reasonably practicable' (SFAIRP) to reduce the risks from the hazards identified to be 'as low as is reasonably practicable' (ALARP).

Competent Persons

It's recommended that risk assessments in general use in Faculties or Professional Service Departments be performed at the Faculty or Professional Service Department level. Specific assessments should be performed by the individuals responsible for the work areas where these work activities occur as they will likely have the greatest knowledge of the activities being undertaken.

All risk assessments should be undertaken by competent person(s). In this context, a competent person is someone who has knowledge and/or understanding of the:

- Work involved through personal or technical experience;
- Principles of risk assessment and methods of preventing or reducing risks;
- Specific subject under assessment, or completed appropriate training.

Competent persons may also wish to consult and include other colleagues who are involve with the activities being assessed on a day-to-day basis during the risk assessment process, in line with recognised best practice. The findings of all risk assessments, and in particular details of the suitable and sufficient control measures identified by the risk assessment, should be communicated and shared with all affected persons.

Risk Assessment Training

The Health, Safety and Environment Team offers a risk assessment training course, which provides delegates with an understanding of:

- How to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment;

- The legal duties which relate to undertaking a risk assessment;
- Considerations at each stage of the risk assessment process;
- How to rate risks according to their likelihood and severity to ensure suitable control measures are put in place.

Further information relating to the risk assessment training course is available at: https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/training/risk-training/.

When to Conduct a Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is required for any activity or group of activities where there is the potential to cause harm, either physically, mentally or financially, regardless of the severity. A risk assessment should be conducted before any work or activities commence which have the potential to present a risk of injury or ill health.

It is only necessary to conduct a risk assessment where a preliminary scope of the activity shows that hazards identified have the potential to pose a significant risk and/or when it is unclear that existing or planned controls are adequate in principle and practice. A risk assessment may not be required if it is clear from a preliminary review that the risks are trivial or that a previous assessment has proven that existing or planned controls:

- conform to well-established legal requirements or standards;
- are appropriate for the activity;
- are, or will be, understood and implemented by everyone involved with the activity.

Although in some situations a risk assessment may not be considered necessary, appropriate control measures should continue to be implemented.

Statutory requirements also exist which require specific risk assessments to be completed separately to a standard risk assessment. These include:

i. Asbestos
ii. Ionising Radiation
iii. Lead
iv. Noise
v. Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH)
vi. Display Screen Equipment (DSE)
vii. Manual Handling
viii. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
ix. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)
x. Working in Confined Spaces

In some cases, these specifics hazards can be combined within a single risk assessment (e.g. manual handling and PPE), however this may not be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. manual handling and ionising radiation).

Principles of Risk Assessment

Risk assessments assist with an analysis and understanding of the risk profile for an activity. Risk assessments should include:

- The nature and level of the risks and hazards identified;
- The likelihood of adverse effects occurring and the possible severity;
- Costs associated with each type of risk;
- Effectiveness of the control measures in place to manage the risk.

All risk assessments should be undertaken in accordance with the principles of the Hierarchy of Hazard Control:

i. Eliminate – Redesign the task or use of specific substances to remove the hazard e.g. avoid working at height.
ii. Replace – Change the material or process to reduce the hazard e.g. use a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) instead of a ladder for working at height.
iii. Isolate – Use engineering controls to prevent the hazard e.g. install local exhaust ventilation (LEV) or machinery guarding to separate the hazard from the user.
iv. Controls – Use administrative controls to reduce the hazard e.g. reduce the exposure time and training provision.
v. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Only after all the above have been tried and found ineffective to control risks SFARP to be ALARP, PPE must be provided e.g. face masks and harnesses.
vi. Discipline – This is not a final measure; it should be implemented at all stages of the control hierarchy and includes effective communication and assurance that all procedures are adhered to and followed.

Risk Assessment Template

The Health, Safety and Environment Team have developed a risk assessment template which should be used for all appropriate University activities. This template provides a framework which aligns with best practice and recognised standards.

Further information relating to risk assessment, including the University's Risk Assessment Template (F003) is available at: https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/proc-prac/risk-assessment/.

Completing the Risk Assessment Template

a) The Activity

The assessed activity may be defined by the particular functions carried out by a Faculty or Department (e.g. a process or operation using an item, plant or equipment); work undertaken in a defined area; or work carried out by individuals or groups of people (e.g. maintenance staff).

b) Hazards

These may be identified by analysing the various tasks that colleagues undertake: by inspecting the workplace; talking to staff and operators; consulting material safety data sheets (MSDS) or reference books; assessing current procedures; or analysing incident report forms. In this section, list the hazardous agents, substances,

equipment, machines and tools or the processes themselves (e.g. working from height) which apply to the activity under consideration.

c) Persons at Risk

This section should identify the individuals who may be exposed to the hazards. There is no need to name individuals people, but is necessary to note the position or group of individuals (e.g. 'operator' or 'bystander'). It may be important to specifically identify:

i. Medical conditions that pose an extra danger;
ii. Life-threatening allergies;
iii. Young persons.

This section should include all groups or types of individuals who may be harmed by the hazards identified, and may vary between different hazards relating to the same activity.

d) Categorising the Risk

The categorisation of risk relates to the consequences of the identified hazards causing harm. This will generally be assessed with consideration for the following risk matrix, which accompanies the University's Risk Assessment Template:

Risk matrix – *use this to determine risk for each hazard i.e. 'how bad and how likely'*	**Likelihood of Harm**				
Severity of Harm	**Very Unlikely (1)**	**Unlikely (2)**	**Fairly Likely (3)**	**Likely (4)**	**Very Likely (5)**
Negligible (1) *e.g. small bruise*	1	2	3	4	5
Slight (2) *e.g. small cut, deep bruise*	2	4	6	8	10
Moderate (3) *e.g. deep cut, torn muscle*	3	6	9	12	15
Severe (4) *e.g. fracture, loss of consciousness*	4	8	12	16	20
Very Severe (5) *e.g. death, permanent disability*	5	10	15	20	25

Both the likelihood of harm and the severity if the harm were to occur should be used to produce an overall risk factor of the hazard. The likelihood of the hazard occurring or risk being realised may relate to factors such as the operator's experience, equipment reliability and/or environmental conditions.

For the risk factor section, the risk should be initially assessed as if no control measures are currently in place and the activity were undertaken without any control measures identified.

e) Control Measures

This section should identify the control measures to be implemented to reduce the risks associated with the hazards identified. All current and planned control measures to reduce the risk of any of the identified hazards should be included. Colleagues should follow the principles of the Hierarchy of Hazard Control when identifying appropriate control measures.

f) Evaluating the Residual Risk

Following the identification of control measures, the residual risk should be re-evaluated using the same risk matrix. This should be calculates as previously, however this time, take into account for the control measures identified. During this process, the impact on the likelihood and severity of the risk of the current arrangements, safe systems of work, approved procedures and instructions should be considered.

Colleagues should determine whether the existing arrangements, procedures and rules (including any additional control measures identified) are appropriate in the context of the hazards and risks. If the assessment concludes that the existing or proposed safety precautions are inadequate or the residual risk is deemed to be too high to allow commencement of the task or activity, additional or alternative precautions would need to be developed. As this may require a change in process, the original risk assessment should be reviewed, based upon these necessary changes.

Finalising and Communicating Risk Assessments

It may be beneficial to produce the risk assessment with the user(s) or those who would habitually undertake the activity as to provide ownership to the assessment, along with being an effective way of communicating the results. The assessments must be signed and dated as an indication of an approved document.

Effective communication of the results of the risk assessment, particularly in respect of the control measures identified to all staff involved in the process or activity, is imperative. Current risk assessments must be stored in appropriate location on a local system so that all necessary people can easily access the latest document. Previous risk assessment versions should also be archived on a local system.

Affected persons will be expected to adhere to and comply with the control measures identified and communicated during the risk assessment process.

Reviewing Risk Assessments

All risk assessments should be reviewed regularly. As a minimum, risk assessments should be reviewed at least annually, but certain situations may prompt an immediate or more regular review schedules. The types of situations which may prompt more regular review of risk assessments will include, but will not be limited to:

- Following an incident or near miss involving or relating to the activity;
- Following the introduction of any new equipment, substances and/or procedures that introduce new or different hazards into the workplace;
- Changes to relevant legislation, industry best practices, personnel, and/or the working environment.

The University's Health and Safety Policy requires that risk assessments are reviewed at regular and appropriate intervals to ensure that the hazards identified remain current and control measures continue to be suitable and sufficient.

The date of the most recent review and details of the assessor should be recorded on the risk assessment document following each review.

Additional Information

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2006: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/438/note/made
- Health and Safety Executive HSG65 Managing for health and safety: https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg65.pdf
- Health and Safety Executive Risk assessment: A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace: https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf
- Health and Safety Executive Managing risks and risk assessment at work: https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm
- Aberystwyth University Risk Assessment Webpage: www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/proc-prac/risk-assessment/