**General Risk Assessment Form**



| **Date:** (1) | **Assessed by:** (2) | **Checked / Validated\* by:** (3) | **Location:** (4) | **Assessment ref no** (5) | **Review date:** (6) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Task / premises:** (7) | | | | | |

| **Activity** (8) | **Hazard** (9) | **Who might be harmed and how** (10) | **Existing measures in place to control the risk** (11) | **Risk rating** (12) | **Result** (13) |
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| **Action plan** (14) | | | | |
| **Ref No** | **Further action required** | **Action by whom** | **Action by when** | **Done** |
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**Notes to accompany General Risk Assessment Form**

This form is recommended for use by Safety Services. It is strongly suggested that you use it for all new assessments, and when existing assessments are being substantially revised. However, its use is not compulsory. Providing the assessor addresses the same issues, alternative layouts may be used.

1. **Date** : Insert date that assessment form is completed. The assessment must be valid on that day, and subsequent days, unless circumstances change and amendments are necessary.
2. **Assessed by** : Insert the name and signature of the assessor. For assessments other than very simple ones, the assessor should have training in assessing risks (eg completed [TLCO300 Principles of Risk Assessment E Learning](https://app.manchester.ac.uk/training/profile.aspx?unitid=7722&parentId=4&returnId=4&returntxt=Return%20To%20Search&returnQs=%3fterm%3drisk+assessment%26org%3d91)) from the L&OD Training Catalogue or equivalent)
3. **Checked / Validated\* by** : delete one.

**Checked by** : Insert the name and signature of someone in a position to check that the assessment has been carried out by a competent person who can identify hazards and assess risk, and that the control measures are reasonable and in place. The checker will normally be a line manager, supervisor, principal investigator, etc. Checking will be appropriate for most risk assessments.

**Validated by** : Use this for higher risk scenarios, eg where complex calculations have to be validated by another “independent” person who is competent to do so, or where the control measure is a strict permit-to-work procedure requiring thorough preparation of a workplace. The validator should also have attended the University’s risk assessment course or equivalent, and will probably be a chartered engineer or professional with expertise in the task being considered. Examples of where validation is required include designs for pressure vessels, load-bearing equipment, lifting equipment carrying personnel or items over populated areas, and similar situations.

1. **Location** : insert details of the exact location, ie building, floor, room or laboratory etc. that the assessment covers If off-campus, provide information about expected location(s) or attach itinerary.
2. **Assessment ref no** : use this to insert any local tracking references used by the school or administrative directorate.
3. **Review date** : insert details of when the assessment will be reviewed as a matter of routine. This will usually be in 1 year’s time, at the end of a short programme of work, or longer period if risks are known to be stable. Note that any assessment **must be reviewed if there are any significant changes – to the work activity, the vicinity, the people exposed to the risk, etc**
4. **Task / premises** : insert the scope of the risk assessment, what it covers and where appropriate, what it doesn’t cover. Include a brief summary of the task/activity/process being assessed, eg typical office activities such as filing, DSE work, lifting and moving small objects, use of miscellaneous electrical equipment. Or, research project [title] involving the use of typical laboratory hardware, including fume cupboards, hot plates, ovens, analysis equipment, flammable solvents, etc. NB ensure all the activities associated with the task are included eg preparation steps, maintenance tasks and waste disposal/clean up activity.
5. **Activity** : use the column to describe each separate activity covered by the assessment. The number of rows is unlimited, although how many are used for one assessment will depend on how the task / premises is sub-divided. For laboratory work, activities in one particular lab or for one particular project might include: use of gas cylinders, use of fume cupboard, use of computer or other electrical equipment, use of lab ovens, hot plates or heaters, use of substances hazardous to health, etc
6. **Hazard** : for each activity, think about and list the hazards that may cause harm as a result of the specific work you intend to do. Remember to consider hazards that are not immediately obvious. For example, use of a lathe will require identification of the machine hazards, but also identification of hazards associated with the use of cutting oils (dermatitis), poor lighting, slipping on oil leaks, repetitive actions, etc. The same activity might well have several hazards associated with it.   
     
   Assessment of simple chemical risks (eg use of cleaning chemicals in accordance with the instructions on the bottle) may be recorded here. More complex Chemical risk assessments eg for laboratory processes, can be recorded on a specific COSHH / Chemical risk assessment form.
7. **Who might be harmed and how** : Think about all who may be harmed by each hazard and what that harm might be. List everyone who might be affected by the activity and specify groups particularly at risk. Remember those who are not immediately involved in the work, eg colleagues, cleaners, young persons on work experience, maintenance contractors, Estates personnel carrying out routine maintenance and other work. Remember also that the risks for different groups will vary. Eg someone who needs to repair a laser may need to expose the beam path more than a laser user would do. Vulnerable groups could include children on organised visits, pregnant/nursing mothers, or employees and students with known disabilities or health conditions, or those working alone (this is not a definitive list).

For each group, describe how harm might come about, eg an obstruction or wet patch on an exit route is a hazard that might cause a trip and fall; use of electrical equipment might give rise to a risk of electric shock; use of a ultraviolet light source could burn eyes or skin.

1. **Existing measures in place to control the risk** : list all measures that are already in place to mitigate the risk. They should be considered in the following order of effectiveness; a combination of controls is usually required:

**Eliminate** the hazard completely

**Substitute** by using a less hazardous option

**Engineering Controls** to isolate people from the hazard eg work in a fume cupboard or use other local exhaust ventilation, ensure machines are guarded,

**Administration Controls** – eg training requirements, supervisory requirements, use of safe systems of work, signage, access control, reducing time spent at the task

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – specify exactly what type will be needed to control the risk

(see also University Arrangements Chapter 9 & associated guidance)  
  
Many of these will have been implemented for other reasons, but should nevertheless be recognised as means of controlling risk. For example, restricting access to laboratories or machine rooms for security reasons also controls the risk of unauthorised and unskilled access to dangerous equipment. A standard operating procedure or local rules (eg for work with ionising radiation, lasers or biological hazards) will often address risks. Some specific hazards may require detailed assessments in accordance with specific legislation (eg COSHH, DSEAR, manual handling, DSE work). Where this is the case, and a detailed assessment has already been done in another format, the master risk assessment can simply cross-reference to other documentation. For example, the activity might be ‘use of a carcinogen’, the hazard might be ‘exposure to hazardous substances’, the existing control measures might all be listed in a COSHH assessment. Controls might also include use of qualified and/or experienced staff who are competent to carry out certain tasks; an action plan might include training requirements for other people who will be carrying out those tasks.

1. **Risk Rating** : the simplest form of risk assessment is to rate the remaining risk as high, medium or low, depending on how likely the activity is to cause harm and how serious that harm might be.

The risk is **LOW** - if it is most unlikely that harm would arise under the controlled conditions listed, and even if exposure occurred, the injury would be slight.

The risk is **MEDIUM** - if it is more likely that harm might actually occur and the outcome could be more serious (eg some time off work, or a minor physical injury.

The risk is **HIGH** - if injury is likely to arise (eg there have been previous incidents, the situation “looks like an accident waiting to happen”) and that injury might be serious (broken bones, trip to the hospital, loss of consciousness), or even a fatality.

Schools or Directorates may choose to use other rating systems. Typical amongst these are matrices (of 3x3, 4x4, 5x5 or even more complex) which require the assessor to select a numerical rating for both “likelihood that harm will arise” and “severity of that harm”. These may give a spurious sense of accuracy and reliability – none are based on quantitative methods. There are methods of estimating risk quantitatively, and these may be appropriate for complex design of load bearing structures and the like.

Advice on methods of complex risk assessment is available from Safety Services. Whatever system of assessment is adopted, it is **essential** that the assessor has received suitable training and is familiar with the meaning of the terms (or numbers) used.

1. **Result** : this stage of assessment is often overlooked, but is probably the most important. Assigning a number or rating to a risk does not mean that the risk is necessarily adequately controlled. The options for this column are:

**T = trivial risk**. Use for very low risk activities to show that you have correctly identified a hazard, but that in the particular circumstances, the risk is insignificant.

**A = adequately controlled, no further action necessary.** If your control measures lead you to conclude that the risk is low, and that all legislative requirements have been met (and University policies complied with), then insert A in this column.

**N = not adequately controlled, actions required**. Sometimes, particularly when setting up new procedures or adapting existing processes, the risk assessment might identify that the risk is high or medium when it is capable of being reduced by methods that are reasonably practicable. In these cases, an action plan is required. The plan should list the actions necessary, who they are to be carried out by, a date for completing the actions, and a signature box for the assessor to sign off that the action(s) has been satisfactorily completed. Some action plans will be complex documents; others may be one or two actions that can be completed with a short timescale.

**U = unable to decide. Further information required.** Use this designation if the assessor is unable to complete any of the boxes, for any reason. Sometimes, additional information can be obtained readily (eg from equipment or chemicals suppliers, specialist Safety advisors) but sometimes detailed and prolonged enquiries might be required. Eg is someone is moving a research programme from a research establishment overseas where health and safety legislation is very different from that in the UK.

**For T and A results**, the assessment is complete.

**For N or U results**, more work is required before the assessment can be signed off.

(14) **Action Plan**. Include details of any actions necessary in order to meet the requirements of the information in Section 11 ‘Existing measures in place to control the risk’. Identify someone who will be responsible for ensuring the action is taken and the date by which this should be completed. Put the date when the action has been completed in the final column.