**Generic Covid 19 Risk Assessment for Single Occupancy Offices**



| **Date:**  25 June 2021 | **Assessed by:** | **Checked / Validated\* by:** | **Location:**  University of Manchester Offices | **Assessment ref no:**  **Generic RA (Single use Offices)V0.2** | **Review date:**  **Regularly, as and when PHE or internal university guidance is updated or changed** |
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| **This generic risk assessment covers COVID-19 secure measures for working in a single occupancy office and supplements existing risk assessments; it also includes travel through common areas in buildings**.  **However the University stance is, unless you are advised to return to campus, please continue to work from home.**  **The University has produced instructions, guidance and made significant changes to the campus to ensure the University is COVID 19 secure. This generic risk assessment for single occupancy office based activities is part of that process and the assessment should be suitably adapted to fit the local situation and controls must be followed to ensure your safety, where necessary. This risk assessment relates to the issues relating to the COVID 19 pandemic, it supplements other risk assessments for office based activities which are already in place.**  **Scope**  This risk assessment evaluates risks relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and specifies risk control measure arrangements to minimise these risks so far as is reasonably practicable.  The risk for any individual activity, with the mitigations in place, and separating the activity risk from the health risk, is low (i.e., not increased above the general risk for COVID infection). Specific health risk is addressed through the risk health matrix to all returning staff and with manager’s guidance on this matter. Individuals who are concerned about their risk should discuss the matter with their line manager and/or GP.  The coronavirus virus has an inherent high mutation rate which can lead to “variants of concern” that may be associated with higher transmission rates. Subject to specific government restriction based on the alert level, control measures are required to reduce the onward transmission (hands, face, space), enhanced cleaning and good ventilation remain the same. These should be stringently applied and monitored through local COVID secure observations, reporting to the relevant management unit as described in the locally managed specific risk assessment.  The assessment covers risks of COVID-19 in the workplace and control measures to manage that risk. The assessment will be regularly checked, revised and updated, where required, especially when there  new government advice and guidance  are issued particularly regarding asymptomatic self- testing requirements.  **This document should be adapted to individual circumstances when additional controls are required.**  The following is based on the [University FAQs](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/campus-reopening-corporate-support/faqs/) and other [University Guidance.](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/campus-reopening-corporate-support/guidance-staff/)  All staff are encouraged to report any health and safety concerns regarding the workplace controls in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These should be reported to the Line Manager. | | | | | |

| **Activity** | **Hazard** | **Who might be harmed and how** | **Existing measures to control risk** | | **Risk rating** | **Result** |
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| Working on campus | COVID-19 infection | Ill health in all present by infection | * If staff or anyone in their household have any Covid 19 symptoms they must not come onto campus. * If any member of staff develops symptoms of COVID-19 they must follow the [University’s Guidance for CV Infection on Campus](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=50060). * Managers may also find the document [Managing COVID-19 Infection on Campus](file://nask.man.ac.uk/home$/Documents/Margot/Campus%20re-opening%20and%20corporate%20support/TLSE%20Campus%20Re-opening/Risk%20Assessments%20FINAL/office_Reception/Staff%20may%20also%20find%20the%20document%20Managing%20COVID-19%20Infection%20on%20Campus) to be useful. * Only work that can be undertaken safely and effectively whilst maintaining social distancing requirements of 2m apart will be undertaken. * A risk-based cleaning programme as part of the wider COVID-secure risk control framework has been instigated by the University. * Occupiers should ensure that relevant touch points are wiped at the end of the working day. * The University have also been ensuring that buildings are adequately ventilated; staff have a role to play, by considering ways to maintain and increase the supply of fresh air. For further details please see [staffnet](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/news/display/?id=24876). * If staff are anxious about returning to campus for whatever reason or have any health concerns they should discuss this with their line manager for more guidance see the [FAQs](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/campus-reopening-corporate-support/faqs/#returningtocampus) * Staff should use sanitiser at building entrances and wash hands regularly throughout the day. * Managers should follow [Campus reopening support, guidance for managers](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/campus-reopening-corporate-support/guidance-leaders-managers/) * Staff should follow [Returning to work on campus](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=50273)   and for more detail [Guidance for Staff](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/campus-reopening-corporate-support/guidance-staff/)   * Signs, footprints and arrows have been installed throughout the campus to inform staff and students about Covid 19 requirements; all personnel are expected to follow these instructions. Staff should adhere to appropriate social distancing rules and stay 2m apart. * Meetings and other communication should be undertaken via video conferencing (eg. zoom, Microsoft teams.) or by phone * Staff are required to wear face covering in indoor public and multiuser spaces. However, their use is not a substitute for social distancing. * You do not have to wear a face covering in a single user office. * Staff are advised to follow [Returning to work on campus](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=50273) guidance for when putting on and removing face covering and to wash hands after removing or touching face covering. | | Low | A |
| Working on campus | COVID-19 infection | Ill health in all present by infection | * The instruction in [Returning to work on campus](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=50273) should be followed in particular: * Equipment should not be shared * If in exceptional circumstances it is necessary to share equipment it must be thoroughly cleaned between users with wipes and advise staff to clean touch points of photocopiers and other electronic equipment before and after use. * Staff advised to keep the amount of personal items brought into the office to a minimum * Keep surfaces clear to make it easier to clean and reduce the likelihood of contaminating objects. * Staff should clean the touch points of kettles and fridges before and after use. * In single occupancy offices, staff should clean touch points in own office at least daily. If other staff occupy the office at different times, the staff should clean touch points in the office on arrival and end of the day. | Low | | A |
| Working on Campus | COVID-19 infection | Ill health in all present by infection | * Staff should ventilate offices by opening windows and office doors where possible. * Staff may use kitchens but will have to clean any touch points with wipes. * Food preparation on campus is not recommended, staff need to either bring a packed lunch or buy from food outlets on campus. * Staff to use own cutlery and crockery and wash in warm soapy water after use. * Staff to bring own milk for tea and coffee rather than share. * Toilets are cleaned by House Services once a day. Doors to toilets may be wedged open to reduce need to touch handle, unless marked as a fire door. Staff should clean touch points with wipes. * Use the stairs if able to; * Signage regarding lift used will be followed if their use is required. | | Low | A |
| First aid cover | COVID-19 infection | Ill health in first aiders giving first aid by infection | * First aiders to follow [University](file://nask.man.ac.uk/home$/Downloads/First%20Aid%20at%20Work-g%20v2.2.pdf) Guidance (See Appendix 7) on giving first aid during COVID 19 pandemic | | Low | A |
| Assessing/ participating in emergency evacuation | COVID-19 infection | Ill health in all present involved in emergency evacuation by infection | * During an evacuation, leaving the building quickly is the priority. Due to the short duration of an evacuation, if necessary, 2m distancing can be broken temporarily, but must be followed again once outside. | | Low | A |
| Entering campus after 6 months working at home | Psychological ill health | Staff returning to campus may be at risk of traumatic effects and anxiety about becoming infected with covid 19 | * Levels of anxiety may be elevated among staff returning to work, along with fear of infection. Managers are advised to continue to discuss with staff to support employees and acknowledge the current situation | | Low | A |
| Staff working remotely from the line manager on campus or at home | Stress | Staff returning to campus suffering from feelings of isolation and anxiety | * Line managers are advised to continue to monitor the wellbeing of staff who continue to work remote from the line manager and maintain communication regarding work and personal wellbeing. | | Low | A |

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| **Action plan** (14) | | | | |
| **Ref No** | **Further action required** | **Action by whom** | **Action by when** | **Done** |
|  | **Line managers to discuss any issues regarding returning to campus with relevant staff as required** |  |  |  |
|  | **Provide first aiders with current guidance on giving first aid in a covid 19 pandemic** |  |  |  |
|  | **Make and put up signage as mentioned regarding cleaning** |  |  |  |

**Notes to accompany General Risk Assessment Form**

This form is the one recommended by Safety Services, and used on the University’s risk assessment training courses. 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 attended the University course on risk assessments (THS 15 Principles of Risk Assessment)
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. 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 might 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 a brief summary of the task, eg typical office activities such as filing, DSE work, lifting and moving small objects, use of misc electrical equipment. Or, research project [title] involving the use of typical laboratory hardware, including fume cupboards, hot plates, ovens, analysis equipment, flammable solvents, etc.
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, list the hazards. Remember to look at 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 COSHH assessments eg for laboratory processes, should be recorded on the specific COSHH forms.
7. **Who might be harmed and how** : insert everyone who might be affected by the activity and specify groups particularly at risk. Remember those who are not immediately involved in the work, including 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 users of the laser would do. Vulnerable groups could include children on organised visits, someone who is pregnant, or employees and students with known disabilities or health conditions (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 to control the risk** : list all measures that already mitigate the risk. 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.
2. **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 relatively 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 administrative 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 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 University 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 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.