

Risk assessment policy

1. Introduction

Risk assessment is a pivotal concept in health and safety risk management. However, it is often seen as a bureaucratic or a complex process. Neither is true. Risk assessment is a valuable tool in preventing and controlling risks in the workplace, helping with the planning of work, the development of safety procedures and reducing the number of accidents in the workplace. It is also a statutory requirement and failure to comply, leaves the University vulnerable to enforcement action, with obvious deleterious costs to the University in terms of fines, increased insurance premiums and the loss of reputation, business and research continuity.

This policy sets out the legal context of risk assessments and clarifies the risk assessment process for those required to undertake them. Key requirements of the policy are;

- All significant hazards must be risk assessed
- Risk assessments must be reviewed regularly
- Schools must maintain a risk assessment register
- Everyone must take responsibility for, and take an active role in, the risk assessment process, including; Managers, Academic Supervisors, technicians, researchers etc.

2. Policy

Loughborough University is committed to achieving and maintaining the highest standards of health and safety for all employees, students and anyone else who may be affected by the University's activities. This is to be accomplished by;

- the identification of all significant workplace hazards,
- the identification of anyone who may be exposed to the hazards and how they may be harmed,
- the evaluation of the risks to which employees, students and others are exposed,
- the selection and monitoring of realistic and practical preventative and control measures to ensure safety in the workplace, and,
- the recording and regular review of assessments

Risk assessments must be carried out by competent people; e.g. those with the necessary training, experience, knowledge, skill etc. Risk assessment training is mandatory for; Safety Officers and Construction Small Works Coordinators, Workshop and Laboratory Technical / Maintenance and Facility Managers.

It is available to all other staff following an assessment of training needs by the relevant School etc.

Risk assessments must be recorded, (hardcopy or electronically), and must be accessible and available for reference and inspection upon request.

Risk assessments must be reviewed regularly. The review period depends on the hazards associated with the activity, the level of risk associated with them, the number of people affected, length of time the activity takes, how often the activity is done etc.

University guidance on completing risk assessment is separate to this policy document. The guidance is entitled; "Completing risk assessments - health and safety guidance". (Go to; <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/health-safety/policies/guidance/>).

3. Scope

Loughborough University is a large and complex organization conducting a wide range of activities. This policy document sets out how the University will identify and manage risks associated with all significant hazards associated with the University's activities that may affect the health, safety and welfare of staff, students and others.

4. Legislation

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 ("MHRegs") impose a duty on employers to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments of all significant hazards in the workplace in order, to identify the risks to employees and those who may be affected by, or have a connection with, any work activity. Where the risk assessment made under the MHRegs identifies significant specific hazards, such as hazardous chemicals, a risk assessment on those specific hazards must be undertaken, under the auspices of the specific relevant legislation. E.g. the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002. Separate University policies deal with these specific hazards. (Please refer to the University Health & Safety Service (UH&SS) website for further information; <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/health-safety/>).

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Heads of Schools and Professional Services and other academic and administrative units shall:

- Ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments are completed by competent people (*See *Note* below).
- Draw up prioritized action plans and implement findings of risk assessments.
- Ensure senior managers are aware of, and are provided with, sufficient resources for the implementation of any action plans.
- Consult with, and involve, staff and safety representatives during the risk assessment process.
- Ensure the findings of risk assessment are communicated to employees and others as appropriate.
- Ensure employees work in accordance with findings of risk assessments and that they are appropriately informed, instructed, trained and supervised.
- Ensure risk assessments are recorded and are kept available for inspection for their areas of responsibility
- Ensure risk assessments are reviewed regularly, e.g. after a case of ill health, an accident or near miss, where processes or personnel change, where legislation changes, where the risk assessment is considered no longer valid and where the review date has been reached.
- Ensure an up-to-date risk assessment register is maintained to facilitate efficient monitoring and

help establish whether risk assessments have been carried out comprehensively across all activities.

**(Note; In practice the task of carrying out risk assessments is usually delegated to those who are most familiar with the activity, project or equipment being assessed or to those who create the risk. They may be line managers, academic supervisors or individuals directly involved in the work. They will be best placed to understand the nature of the work and ensure that on a day-to-day basis, risks are adequately controlled. There should also be consultation with Union safety representatives where necessary. Heads of Schools, Departments and Professional Services should identify, in their local health and safety policy, which individuals or groups of individuals are competent to carry out risk assessments and for reviewing them. They should also arrange for the risk assessment register, (see an example at Appendix A), to be maintained locally and a copy forwarded to UH&SS upon request).*

5.2 School / Departmental Safety Officers:

- Assist the person in charge of the work activity to undertake risk assessments,
- Help identify and implement control measures,
- Assist in effectively communicating the outcomes of the risk assessment to employees and others as appropriate.

5.3 University Health and Safety Service:

The UH&SS will monitor arrangements and will assist Schools and Professional Services by:

- assisting with the identification and implementation of safe systems of work when required,
- assist in finding relevant standards and good practice guidance to inform risk assessments,
- developing and reviewing risk assessment policy, key procedures and standards documents upon request,
- monitoring risk assessment registers and ensure copies are sent to the UH&SS,
- monitoring the suitability and sufficiency of risk assessments,
- conducting audits, and,
- providing specialist advice, support and training where required.

5.4 Employees, researchers and students:

- Assist managers with the risk assessment process
- Work in accordance with safety procedures, standards, instructions and training and findings of risk assessments.
- Inform line managers of any difficulties or concerns with work practices, defective equipment, the working environment or findings of risk assessments.
- Advise line managers of any change in circumstances which may affect their ability to work safely or which may affect the findings of risk assessments.
- Make themselves fully aware of their responsibilities.
- Report to management any personal conditions which may put them at greater risk when carrying out work activities
- Report to a responsible person any problems relating to their work activities along with any shortcoming they believe exist in the arrangements made to protect them.

6. Risk assessment register

Each School shall create and maintain a risk assessment register. This will be a central single repository for School risk assessments. A copy shall be available for inspection at any time. (An example of a template is attached as Appendix A).

The purpose of the risk assessment register is to enable information to be exchanged within Schools and across the University, avoiding duplication of effort and creating consistency. The register 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 in Schools.

7. Signing off risk assessments

Risk assessments should be checked and signed off by managers, academic supervisors, principal investigators, senior technicians or SSO's / DSO's to indicate that all significant hazards have been identified and that appropriate controls measures will be used. Although research students can usefully be involved in the preparation of risk assessments, they must be signed off by an authorized person as described above. The Head of School / Department / Support Service should indicate how assessments will be carried out within the relevant School etc, e.g. who is competent to carry out assessments and/or sign them off.

8. Monitoring risk assessments

While the quality of the assessment is primarily the responsibility of those carrying out the assessment, those assessments which clearly do not address all the significant hazards, should be returned by the person checking the assessment for further consideration. Managers, academic supervisors, principal investigators or SSO's / DSO's should check at least annually that they have copies of assessments for all relevant work and they should monitor that risks are adequately controlled in practice and that written risk assessments are being carried out where necessary. In essence, to make sure they are suitable and sufficient. This could be done during routine safety inspections or audits where spot checks could be made. The manager, academic supervisor, principal investigator or SSO / DSO, should check that project risk assessments are in place before work starts. This could be carried out during induction safety training for new staff and research students.

9. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

- **Risk assessment:** A careful examination of what in your work could cause harm to people, so you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.
- **Hazard:** Something with the potential to cause harm including ill health, injury, loss of product and/or damage to plant and property e.g. hazardous chemicals, trip hazards, manual handling etc.

- **Risk rating:** The evaluation of the level of risk which may arise from the hazard, based upon the likelihood of the event occurring and the potential severity of the consequence.
- **Residual risk:** The level of risk remaining once control measures have been applied to reduce risks so far as reasonably practicable.
- **Harm:** Injury, ill-health to people and effects on the University.
- **Control measures:** Preventative and precautionary measures used to reduce or control risks arising from identified hazards

10. Document Management Table

Version	Owner	Revised by	Summary of revision	Date of revision	Date of next revision
V1	UH&SS	Original draft by H Weaver-	-	Original draft June 2013	
V2	(Approved by HSEC 21 February 2014)	H Weaver	Committee version for approval	Feb 2014	
V3	UHSS	"	Review and update	June 2015	
V4	"	"	Review and up date	February 2017	
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