UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

RISK ASSESSMENT

Corporate Health and Safety Guidance

June 2024

Contents

Introduction

As part of managing the health and safety of the University, risks in the workplace must be controlled. To do this, consideration needs to be made towards areas of work which might cause harm to people and decide whether reasonable steps are being taken to prevent that harm. This is known as risk assessment and it is something that is required by law.

A risk assessment is not about creating substantial amounts of paperwork but rather about identifying sensible measures to control risks in the workplace. It is likely that measures are already in place to protect staff and students, but the risk assessment process will help to identify whether all risks have been considered.

Consider how accidents and ill health could happen in the workplace, a focus on the foreseeable hazards that are most likely to occur and cause harm.

Legislation

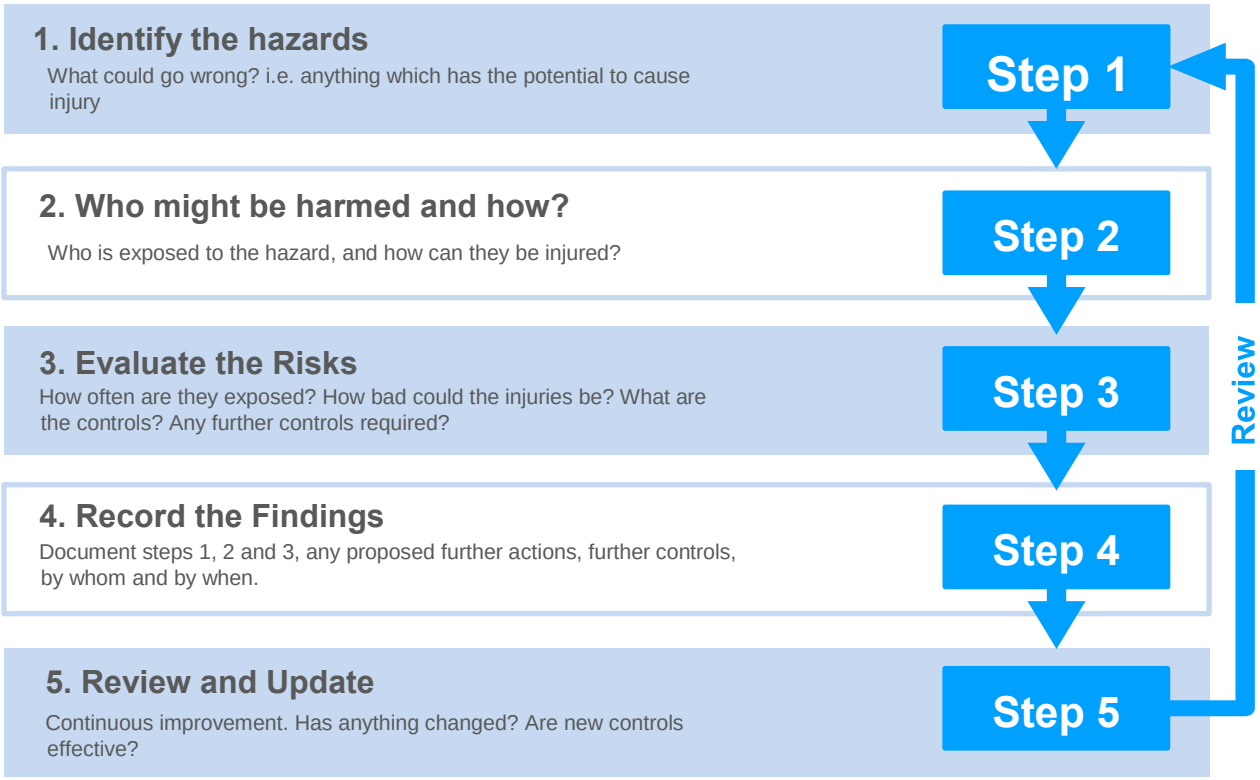
As an employer, the University is legally required to protect employees, students and others from harm. There are two pieces of legislation that set out the requirements for assessing risk in the workplace: The Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. Under these regulations, the University must:

- Identify what could cause injury or illness in the workplace (hazards).
- Decide how likely someone could be harmed and how seriously (risk).
- Take action to eliminate the hazard, or control the risk if this is not possible. For more details regarding eliminating hazards and controlling risks in the workplace, please see Appendices A (Principles of Prevention) and B (Hierarchy of Controls).

Risk Assessment

Assessing risk is the first part of the overall process for controlling risks in the University. For most hazards, the steps required to be taken are straightforward and explained in this guidance. Completing a risk assessment following the 'five steps' provided by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will ensure that the risks throughout the University are evaluated thoroughly and effectively.

The five steps are:



Step 1: Identify the Hazards

One of the most important aspects of a risk assessment is accurately identifying potential hazards in the workplace. A good starting point is to walk around the workplace and consider the hazards that may result from any activities, processes, or substances used that could injure people or harm their health.

It is easy to overlook some hazards, so below are some tips to help identify the ones that matter:

- Check manufacturers' instructions or data sheets for chemicals and equipment. They can be very helpful in explaining the hazards and putting them in perspective.
- Look back at previous accidents and ill-health records. These often help to identify the less obvious hazards.
- Take account of non-routine operations (e.g. maintenance, cleaning operations or changes in production cycles).
- Remember to consider long-term hazards to health (e.g. high noise levels or exposure to harmful substances).
- Visit the HSE website – the HSE publishes practical guidance on hazards and how to control them.

Step 2: Who might be harmed and how?

The next step is to consider how staff, students, or others who may be present, such as contractors or visitors, might be harmed. Consider asking colleagues and peers what they think the hazards are, as they may notice some that are less obvious and may have valuable input regarding controlling the risks.

For each hazard, it is key to highlight who might be harmed by it. This will help to identify the best way of controlling the risk. That does not mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (e.g. people working in the storeroom or students). To help with this, consider the following:

- Some people may have particular requirements, e.g. new and young workers, migrant workers, new or expectant mothers, people with disabilities, temporary workers, contractors, home workers and lone workers.

- Consider people who might not be in the workplace all the time, such as visitors, contractors, and maintenance workers.
- Take members of the public into account if workplace activities could harm them.
- If the workplace is shared with others, consider all types of work that take place in the area and all the individuals (staff, students, and others) who may be affected by it. Liaising with peers, colleagues, and students is good practice to ensure that all risks and persons at risk are considered.

Step 3: Evaluate the Risks

Having identified the hazards, the next step is to decide how likely harm will occur (the level of risk) and what to do about it. Risk is a part of everyday life. The aim of a risk assessment is not to eliminate all risks. However, ensuring the main risks have been identified and measures are in place to manage them responsibly is important.

To determine the level of risk that a hazard exposes staff, students, and others to, the following definition must be considered:

- Likelihood / Probability—This means that if a hazard occurs, what are the chances of the most likely safety mishap occurring?
- Severity / Impact – If a hazard occurs and is not mitigated against, what is the severity of the most likely problem?

The likelihood and severity values can then be applied to the risk evaluation table to calculate the risk level that a hazard presents. The final level of risk is then calculated by using the following formula:

- Risk Factor = likelihood x severity

The Risk Evaluation Matrix:

Table 1 - Risk Evaluation							
Impact - Severity (Table 3)	Catastrophic	5	5 Low	10 Medium	15 High	20 High	25 High
	Major	4	4 Low	8 Medium	12 Medium	16 High	20 High
	Moderate	3	3 Low	6 Low	9 Medium	12 Medium	15 High
	Low	2	2 Low	4 Low	6 Low	8 Medium	10 Medium
	Negligible	1	1 Low	2 Low	3 Low	4 Low	5 Low
RISK = Likelihood (Table 2) x Impact (Table 3)			1	2	3	4	5
			Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
			Likelihood/Probability (Table 2)				

Table 2 - Likelihood/Probability				
1	Extremely Unlikely	Less than 20%	Once every two years (Has not occurred)	Low
2	Unlikely	20% to 39%	Once a year (Rarely Occurs)	Low / medium
3	Possible	40% to 59%	Once a month (Possible but not common)	Medium
4	Likely	50% to 79%	Once a week (Has before, will again)	Medium / high
5	Almost Certain	80% or more	Once a day or more (Occurs frequently)	High

Table 3 - Impact/Severity			
1	Negligible	No Injury / Minor Injury / Minimal Loss / No time off work	Low
2	Low	Minor Injury / Some loss / 3 days or less off work / some damage	Low / medium
3	Moderate	Injury / 4 days or more off work / Damage / Loss / RIDDOR	Medium
4	Major	Long term injury / irreversible injury / serious damage or loss / RIDDOR Incident	Medium / high
5	Catastrophic	One or more fatalities / irreversible injury / substantial damage or loss / RIDDOR	High

Once the risk associated with a hazard has been calculated, control measures may be necessary to either remove the hazard entirely or reduce the risk of exposure to it to an acceptable level (by reducing the likelihood, severity, or both).

Generally, it is important to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the risk in terms of money, time or trouble. Risk assessments should only include hazards that could reasonably be expected to occur. They do not need to consider unforeseeable risks.

Reflect on the control measures that are already in place. Consider the following:

- Can the hazard be removed altogether?
- If not, what control measures can be implemented to ensure that harm is unlikely?

When considering the reasonably practicable steps that can be taken to control the risks, refer to the Hierarchy of Controls (Appendix B). This explains the order of effectiveness of control measures that can reduce the potential exposure to hazards, as follows:

- Elimination – physically removing the hazard.
- Substitution – replacing the hazard with something less hazardous.
- Engineering controls – isolating people from the hazard, e.g. with guards, barriers or cordons.
- Administrative controls: Implementing procedures, policies, training, information, and instruction to ensure safer working practices.
- Personal Protective Equipment – provision of necessary PPE to protect the worker.

Improving health and safety does not need to cost a lot. Many of the above actions are low-cost precautions which can be implemented to control the risks. Failure to take simple precautions can cost much more if an accident occurs.

Involve colleagues and peers to ensure that the control measures proposed will work in practice and will not introduce new hazards. Further advice on this can be found here.

Step 4: Record the Significant Findings

Record the significant findings from steps 1 – 3 (the hazards, who might be harmed and how, and the measures to control the risks). Any record produced should be simple and focused on controls. The University's Risk Assessment Template can be found here.

Any paperwork produced should help to communicate and manage the risks. When writing down the results, please keep it simple and easy to understand, highlighting the hazards and what needs to be done to control them.

A written risk assessment must be suitable and sufficient. To achieve this, it should show that:

- A thorough review of the task or activity has been made.
- It considers who might be affected and how.
- All the obvious and significant hazards have been included, considering the number of people who could be involved.
- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low.
- Colleagues, peers and students/their representatives have been involved in the process.

If the risk assessment identifies several hazards, it is good practice to rank them in order of importance. Address the most serious risks first. Identify long-term solutions for the risks with the most significant consequences and dangers most likely to cause incidents, accidents, or ill health. In some cases, it may be necessary to establish whether any improvements can be implemented quickly, even temporarily, until more reliable controls can be implemented.

Remember, the greater the hazard, the more robust and reliable the control measures must be.

Step 5: Regularly Review and Update

Few workplaces stay the same. Sooner or later, new equipment, substances and procedures will be introduced, which could lead to new hazards impacting the work being undertaken or a change in the risk level of currently identified hazards. Therefore, to ensure risk assessments stay up to date, they must be reviewed under the following circumstances:

- If work has moved to a different location
- If new equipment, tools or machinery have been introduced
- If there have been any changes to individuals, e.g. pregnant women, young people, etc.
- If there has been an accident/incident or near miss in your workplace
- If any colleagues/peers/students have spotted a problem
- Even if nothing has changed, risk assessments should be reviewed at regularly agreed intervals

Specialist Risk Assessments

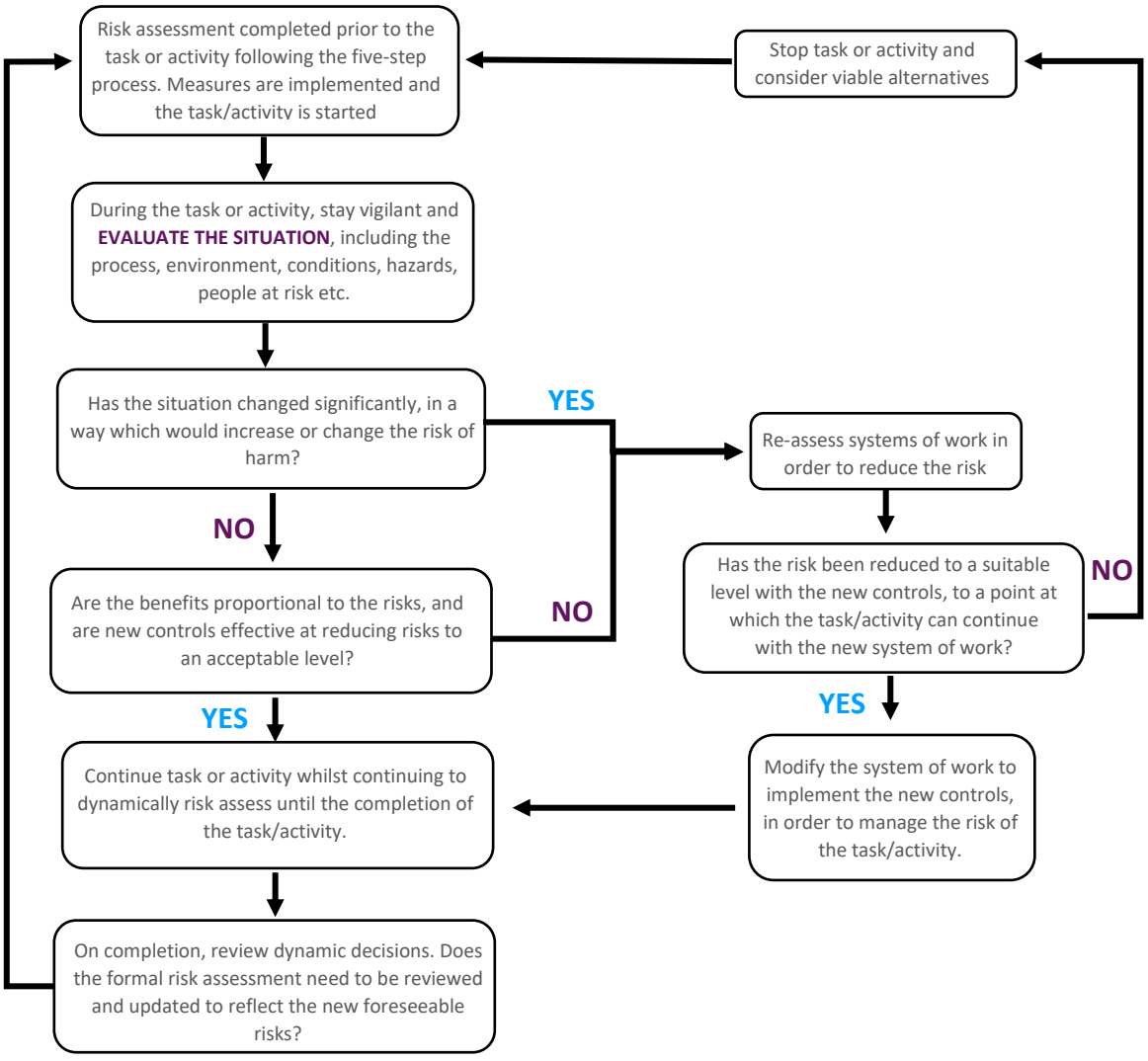
Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, specific risk assessments are required to implement the health and safety requirements for the following groups:

- New and expectant mothers (whether pregnant, breastfeeding, or giving birth in the last six months). Consider reviewing existing risk assessments and controls. Consult with the individual to identify specific conditions or circumstances that may require further controls to be put in place.
- Young persons (under the age of 18). Consider the individual's lack of experience and awareness of risks. In addition to the nature, degree, and duration of exposure to hazards, young persons may require additional health and safety training for certain activities. In some cases, it may not be suitable for young persons to take part in work that involves exposure to particular risks.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

A dynamic risk assessment can be defined as the continuous process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, and acting to eliminate or reduce the risk during a rapidly changing environment, task, or activity. The person responsible for the task/activity must be able to recognise the risks present in order to carry out an effective dynamic risk assessment.

After a risk has been identified during a dynamic risk assessment, the formal risk assessment must be reviewed and updated accordingly to ensure the task/activity is safe to continue. The dynamic risk assessment process is shown in the flowchart below:



Residual Risk

Residual risk can be defined as the risk that remains after the efforts and control measures used to identify and eliminate risks associated with a task or activity have been implemented. Many tasks involve a level of risk that, even after the implementation of control measures, cannot be completely eliminated. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the remaining (residual) risk level before undertaking the task/activity to ensure it is safe to continue.

If there are any hazards in which the level of risk has not been completely controlled, it is important to continue to review the risk assessment and consider whether any further reasonably practicable control measures can be implemented to further reduce the level of risk. Once further controls have been identified, these can be recorded within the action plan section of the University's risk assessment template (as shown in Appendix 4).

Signing Off Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should be checked and signed off by competent and responsible persons. This includes line managers, academic supervisors, senior technicians and local health and safety advisors. This should ensure that all significant hazards have been identified and appropriate control measures will be used.

Although health and safety coordinators can be involved in the preparation of risk assessments, they must be signed off by a responsible person, as described above. The head of school/department/support service should make it clear on their arrangements for signing off risk assessments and how risk assessments will be carried out.

Monitoring Risk Assessments

Where risk assessments clearly do not address all the significant hazards, they should be returned by the responsible person for further consideration. The responsible person(s) should check at least annually to ensure that they have copies of risk assessments for all relevant work. They should also monitor risks to

ensure that they are adequately controlled in practice and that written risk assessments are being carried out where necessary. This could be done during routine safety inspections or audits where spot checks could be made. The responsible person(s) should check that risk assessments are in place before work starts where there is a significant risk.

Risk Assessment Register

Each Faculty/School/Service should have created and maintained a risk assessment register. This will be a central single repository for risk assessments. A copy should be available for inspection at any time. The purpose of the risk assessment register is to enable information to be exchanged within Schools and across the University; avoiding duplication and creating consistency. It also enables the University to ensure that risks are adequately controlled and that it is compliant with legislation. The register will also:

- identify common assessments, allowing best practices to be shared through a consistent approach and easy exchange of information
- highlight areas that still require assessment and that are not compliant with legislation
- highlight assessments that are due for review
- track outstanding actions arising from the risk assessment
- target key areas for improvement
- provide an effective monitoring tool for senior management of the risks throughout the University

Appendix A

Principles of Prevention

a) Avoiding risks;

b) Evaluation of the risks which cannot be avoided;

c) Combating the risks at source;

d) Adapting the work to the individual, especially as regards the design of workplaces, the choice of work equipment and the choice of working and production methods, with a view, in particular, to alleviating monotonous work at a predetermined reiterate work rate and to reducing their effect on health;

e) Adapting to technical progress;

f) Replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or the less dangerous;

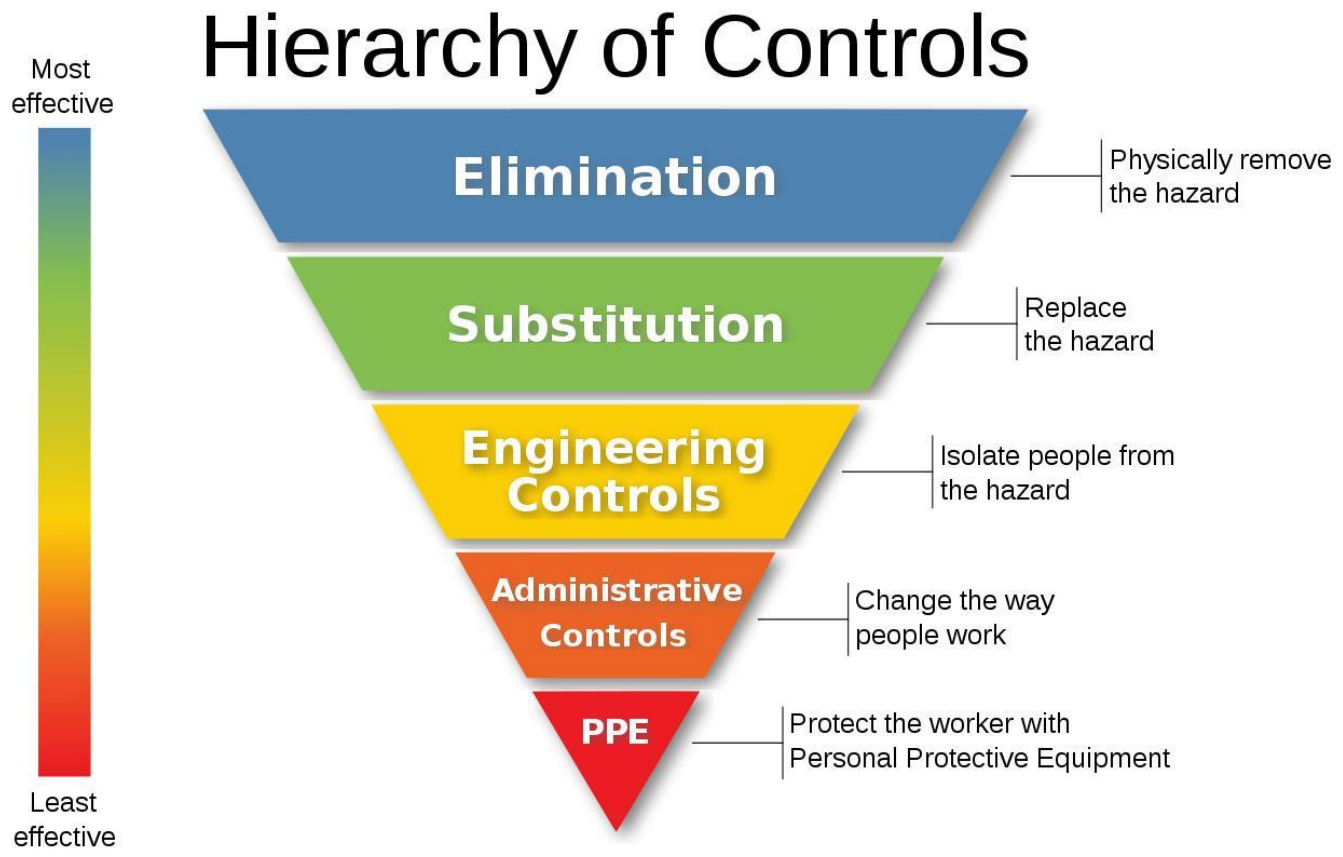
g) Developing a coherent overall prevention policy which covers technology, organisation of work, working conditions, social relationships and the influence of factors relating to the working environment;

h) Giving collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures and

i) Giving appropriate instructions to employees

Appendix B

Hierarchy of Control



Appendix C

Example Risk Assessment Register

Team / Section / Department / Service / School	RA Title	RA Location	Responsible Person for RA	RA Date	RA Review Date	Overall RA Residual Risk Rating (avg)	Total No of risks 12 and above
Health and Safety Department	General Health and Safety Office	H&S central network drive (LINK)	Brent Schwarz (Head of Health and Safety)	27/01/2024	26/01/2025	6	2
Health and Safety Department	Driving for work	H&S central network drive (LINK)	Brent Schwarz (Head of Health and Safety)	27/01/2024	26/01/2025	8	3
Health and Safety Department	Lone Working	H&S central network drive (LINK)	Brent Schwarz (Head of Health and Safety)	27/01/2024	26/01/2025	8	5
Health and Safety Department	Manual Handling	H&S central network drive (LINK)	Brent Schwarz (Head of Health and Safety)	27/01/2024	26/01/2025	6	3

Appendix 4

Example Risk Assessment

Assessment Date:	12th May 2024 Previous review dates: 01/08/23; 01/05/23; 01/04/22	Review Date:	11th May 2025
Faculty/School/Service/Team:	Health and Safety Department		
Site and / or Building and / or Area:	Mercantile Building, Floor 8		
Description of Assessment, i.e. task and / or activity etc.:	General H&S Office / Team Risk Assessment – This risk assessment covers the activities undertaken by the health and safety department and the general working environment.		
Assessor Name(s) Include all those Who were apart of the development of the Risk Assessment:	Charlotte Downs Anthony James	Assessor(s) Sign Off:	Charlotte Downs Anthony James
Responsible Person i.e. Line Manager/Head of School	Brent Schwarz (Head of Health and Safety)	Responsible Person Sign Off:	Brent Schwarz
Number of High Risks (i.e. 12 and above):	0	Number of Actions:	9

RISK EVALUATION TABLES

Table 1 - Risk Evaluation

Impact - Severity (Table 3)							
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RISK = Likelihood (Table 2) x Impact (Table 3)		Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		Likelihood/Probability (Table 2)				

Table 2 - Likelihood/Probability

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Table 3 - Impact/Severity

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4	Major	Long term injury / irreversible injury / serious damage or loss / RIDDOR Incident	Medium / high
5	Catastrophic	One or more fatalities / irreversible injury / substantial damage or loss / RIDDOR	High

Ref	Hazard(s)	Who might be Harmed?	How could they be harmed? (Risk)	Inherent Risk Level LH – Likelihood, IP – Impact, RR – Risk Evaluation Existing Controls in Place (What are you already doing to control the risks)	LH	IP	RR	Residual Risk Level LH – Likelihood, IP – Impact, RR – Risk Evaluation Further Additional Controls (Actions) (What further action needs to be taken to reduce the risk)
HS01	Working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE)	Health and Safety Staff	Staff may suffer posture problems, pain, discomfort or injuries (e.g. to the hands, arms, and of the neck) from overuse or improper use of poorly designed workstations, work environment environments, or posture. Injuries can include RSI (repetitive strain injury)	• Staff receive training in setting up their workstations. • Staff are able to take regular breaks away from screen activity. • DSE self-assessment is carried out annually. Where concerns are raised, 1-2-1 assessments are undertaken. • Workstations and equipment are set up to ensure good posture and to avoid glare and reflections on the screen at induction. • Line manager provides supervision where necessary • Lighting and temperature are suitably controlled and adjustable blinds are available to control natural light. Office has windows to provide natural ventilation. • The office has central heating. Estates and Campus Services undertake building statutory compliance checks and maintain them as necessary. • Eye tests are provided for those who request them, and contributions are made where glasses are required. • When in the office, laptops are used with a docking station, screen, keyboard and mouse. • DSE training compliance is monitored and refreshed every three years.	2	3	6	Managers should provide information on exercises which can be done at the workplace to manage DSE concerns. Staff to be reminded to inform their manager if they have any issues or concerns linked to DSE use. Formalise a monthly office walk and document quarterly.
HS02	Stress / Mental Health	Health and Safety Staff		• Workloads, targets and objectives are set in consultation with staff to ensure they are realistic and achievable. • Staff undergo training on the job where necessary to ensure knowledge and competency. • Staff can talk to line managers or colleagues if feeling unwell. • Staff can contact the employee assistance programme, HR or Occupational Health for further advice if they wish. • UoP policies are in place to deal with stress, etc. • Regular 1-2-1 meetings are in place with line managers.	3	3	9	Staff should be reminded that they can speak confidentially to line managers, HR, or the employee assistance programme if they feel unwell or uneasy about their workload. Develop stress management training for managers to ensure they are suitably equipped to deal with and

				• Annual appraisals are conducted, which consider considering mental health issues and workload management.				effectively manage stress in the workplace.
HS03	Slips, trips and falls	Health and Safety Staff	Risk of injuries such as fractures and bruising if they trip over objects or slip on spillages.	• Good housekeeping is promoted regularly within the office. • Office is visually checked daily, with defects being recorded accordingly. Communal kitchen areas have non-slip floors. • Warning signs are placed on wet floors and during cleaning if there has been a spillage. • Personal storage areas are provided, in addition to dedicated office storage, with appropriate shelving, etc. • Cable management, including PAT testing, is performed regularly. • All areas within the office are well-lit, including stairwells. • A paperless office is promoted to further assist housekeeping. • Waste and recycling bins are provided and emptied daily. • First aiders and first aid provisions are in place if necessary. • When an incident occurs, these are appropriately investigated for root causes and prevention of future incidents. • Correct work equipment is provided and maintained in accordance with statutory requirements and best p practices.	2	3	6	Raise awareness to staff, reminding them to report defects or hazards as appropriate. Promote correct storage of personal items, such as coats and bags.
HS04	Moving and Manual Handling of inanimate loads	Health and Safety Staff	Manual Handling injuries can cause musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). This covers any damage or disorder of the joints or other tissues in the upper/lower limbs or the back. Injuries could be due to incorrect lifting techniques, attempting to lift excessive loads, poor environmental conditions, moving loads repetitively etc.	• Policies / Arrangements / Guidance forms are in place for manual handling. • Manual handling training is provided and available to all staff. • Inanimate load handling e-learning is provided to all staff. • Where possible, staff are encouraged to use mechanical aids to assist with lifting and moving objects, such as trolleys. • Staff are encouraged to work within their physical limitations at all times. • Staff can be referred to occupational Health where necessary. • The department and/or Estates and Campus Services maintain and inspect equipment. Faults are reported, and equipment is taken out of service. • Staff made aware they should store equipment appropriately.	2	4	8	Manager to identify staff who carry out manual handling operations as part of their workload day-to-day workload, workload, day-to-day workload and provide manual handling training. Review of Manual Handling Arrangement to ensure it is current and relevant.

				• Staff encouraged to take adequate rest breaks. • Work practices are reviewed for any staff that may have physical weakness or disabilities. • Staff are provided with the necessary information for tasks. • The H&S team provides necessary awareness and communication.				

Action Plan

Total No of Actions	9	Actions Completed:	6	Actions in Progress:	2	Actions Not Started:	1

Ref	Action(s) Details (This should reflect all the further additional controls highlighted in the above table)	Remedial Action Owner	Target Date	Status	Comments / Updates
HS01	Managers should provide information on exercises which can be done at the workplace to manage DSE concerns.	Charlotte Downs	01/07/24	Completed 25/05/24	Refer to an email dated 25/05/24 and team meeting minutes dated 24/005/24.
HS01	Staff to be reminded to inform their manager if they have any issues or concerns linked to DSE use.	Charlotte Downs	01/07/24	Completed 25/05/24	Refer to an email dated 25/05/24 and team meeting minutes dated 24/005/24.
HS01	Formalise a monthly office walk and document quarterly.	Charlotte Downs	01/09/24	In progress	Draft forms being developed for documenting forms being developed for documenting forms are being developed to document office walks on a quarterly basis.
HS02	Staff to be reminded that they can speak confidentially to line managers, HR, or employee assistance programmes if feeling unwell or uneasy about workload.	Charlotte Downs	01/07/24	Completed 25/05/24	Refer to an email dated 25/05/24 and team meeting minutes dated 24/005/24.
HS02	Develop stress management training for managers to ensure they are suitably equipped to deal with and effectively manage stress in the workplace.	Brent Schwarz	01/09/24	Not started	
HS03	Raise awareness to staff, reminding them to report defects or hazards as appropriate.	Charlotte Downs	01/07/24	Completed 25/05/24	Refer to an email dated 25/05/24 and team meeting minutes dated 24/005/24.
HS03	Promote correct storage of personal items, such as coats and bags.	Charlotte Downs	01/07/24	Completed 25/05/24	Refer to an email dated 25/05/24 and team meeting minutes dated 24/005/24.

HS04	Manager to identify staff who carry out manual handling operations as part of their workload, day-to-day workload and provide manual handling training.	Charlotte Downs	01/08/24	Completed 25/05/24	Refer to an email dated 25/05/24 and team meeting minutes dated 24/005/24.
HS04	Review of Manual Handling Arrangement and guidance to ensure it is current and relevant.	Anthony James	01/08/24	In progress	Arrangement and guidance under review