

Guidance for staff and student leaders:

- “Why do we need to complete a Risk Assessment?” We have **Moral**, **Legal**, and **Financial** obligations to protect people - staff and students have a right to return home how they came in to work or to study.
- It is an employee’s responsibility to work safely, consider themselves and others, cooperate with their employer to meet legal requirements, follow instructions and report hazards. These responsibilities extend to volunteers and student participants as well.
- A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, so you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. It should be a helpful part of the planning process rather than an onerous paperwork exercise.

Definitions:

Hazard Anything with the potential to cause harm, exposure to danger, e.g., moving heavy items

6 groups of hazards:

- **Physical**
- **Mechanical**
- **Chemical**
- **Biological**
- **Environmental**
- **Organisational**

Who might be harmed and how?

Risk *Likelihood of the hazard causing harm x Severity of the likely harm.*

For example: how likely an event volunteer would get hurt lifting a heavy box and if so, how severely hurt would they get?

Control Anything put in place to reduce the likelihood or severity of harm from a hazard.

Five steps to risk assessment:

Step 1 Identify your hazards

Mentally work through the task/event, or look around the area, and think “What may cause harm?” Talk to the people involved in the job or event, they will know more details.

Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?

Who is coming? What are their requirements? What will they be doing?

Step 3 Evaluate risk and consider existing controls/precautions

Once you have identified the hazards, how likely is it someone could be harmed and how serious could it be? Using the Risk Assessment Matrix to rate the risk into either **Low Risk**, **Medium Risk** or **High Risk** categories.

Step 4 Record your findings

What are you already doing to control the risks? What further action can be taken to control the risks?

Can I remove the hazard? If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

Step 5 Monitor and review, update where required

You must review the controls you have put in place to make sure they are working. Are they still effective? Have there been changes to the environment or event?

Update your risk assessment with any changes you make.

Risk Assessment form:

Risk Matrix and Rating Guidance:

To calculate risk, it is simple maths –

$$\text{Severity (of hazard)} \times \text{Likelihood (of risk)} = \text{Overall Risk}$$

Severity is assessed on a scale of 1-5:

1	Trivial	E.g. discomfort, slight bruising etc
2	Minor	E.g. small cut, basic first aid needed etc
3	Moderate	E.g. strain, sprain etc
4	Serious	E.g. fracture, hospitalisation etc
5	Fatal	E.g. single or multiple fatalities

Likelihood is assessed on a scale of 1-5:

1	Remote	Almost never
2	Unlikely	Rare
3	Possible	Uncommon
4	Likely	Happens occasionally
5	Very likely	Frequent

Multiplying the **severity** x **likelihood** gives a number between 1 and 25 – this shows the **overall risk**.

Low Risk (1 – 8)	Medium Risk (9 – 12)	High Risk (15 – 25)
Continue , but review periodically to ensure controls remain effective.	Continue , but implement additional reasonably practicable controls where possible and monitor regularly	STOP THE ACTIVITY Identify new controls. Activity must not proceed until risks are reduced to a low or medium level.

This can be mapped out on the colour coded **Risk Assessment Matrix** on the RA form:

Risk Assessment Matrix						
(b)↓	(a)→	Trivial	Minor	Moderate	Serious	Fatal
Remote		1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely		2	4	6	8	10
Possible		3	6	9	12	15
Likely		4	8	12	16	20
Very likely		5	10	15	20	25

Some example hazards to consider –

- Extreme hot or cold weather – could result in heat stroke, sunburn, slips on ice etc
- Slippery surface – ice or water on floor, could result in falls and potential broken bones
- Blocked access route – fire escape risk, very high severity
- Tripping hazards – could result in falls and potential broken bones

All hazards need to be recorded, even if small and the severity of the incident is low.

Always check over the Risk Assessment, what hazards might have been missed off?

Don't complete a Risk Assessment on your own: speak to the people involved in doing the job / running the event – they will know more of the risks.

Monitor and review Risk Assessments after the event (or periodically if they are standing). Were there any potential risks identified that weren't on the RA? These should be added to future RAs.

An example:

Working at height

Working at height remains one of the biggest causes of fatalities and major injuries - common cases include falls from ladders and through fragile surfaces. 'Work at height' means work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall any distance.

You must make sure work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people with the skills, knowledge, and experience to do the job. You must use the right type of equipment for working at height.

There may be some low-risk situations where common sense tells you that no particular precautions are necessary.

Assessing and controlling the risks, consider:

- Height of the task.
- Duration and frequency.
- Condition of the surface being worked on.

Before working at height, follow these simple steps:

- Avoid working at height where it is reasonably practicable to do so.
- Where work at height can't be avoided, prevent falls by using the right equipment.
- Where the risk cannot be eliminated, minimize the distance and consequences of a fall by using the right type of equipment.

When completing the RA for working from height situations, think of **all** the hazards and possible outcomes that could arise from that situation, however unlikely – they all need to be recorded and assessed, for example when working up a ladder:

If the ladder is blocking a walkway, the ladder could be a tripping hazard for passers-by, the person up the ladder could fall/be knocked to the ground.

Prevention – do as much work as possible from the ground, use extendable tools from ground level to remove the need to climb a ladder.

Minimize – the distance and / or consequences of a fall.

The SU's current Working at Height RA can be found at: [SU Working At Height \(Standing\).pdf](#). No RA should be considered perfect, and RAs should be reviewed periodically or adjusted as lessons are learned and best practice changes. What changes would you make to the RA?