Research Risk Assessments

Principal investigators and researchers are responsible for controlling the risks associated with their project. They ensure risk assessments are undertaken before research starts and review them regularly throughout the project.

START
Will the research involve activities, substances and / or equipment, or is it being undertaken in locations that have the potential to cause physical, psychological, social, legal or economic harm the participants, researchers or others?
And / or
Could the research impact on the University's reputation, legally or economically?

— No → No further action

↓ Yes

Will the research use equipment and / or substances that have been used before, follow standard procedures and be carried out in locations which the PI and / or researchers have previously use as research sites?

— Yes →

↓ No

RISK ASSESSMENT NEEDED
The PI or researcher will need to ensure new risk assessments are carried out.
If the PI / Researcher has not attended research risk assessment training, it is recommended that advice is sought from a University H&S adviser on the risk assessment process and assessing H&S risks.

← No — Are there adequate risk assessments, protocols and safe working procedures already in place?

COMPETENCY and KNOWLEDGE
Risk assessors need to be competent and familiar with the research methodology, equipment, substances and research sites work, or know where to obtain expert advice.

What are the hazards or causes of harm? How can they harm people / the University ?

Who can be harmed? Are there individuals or groups of people especially at risk and if so who?
e.g. researchers, participants, members of the public, minors or vulnerable adults?

ASSESS THE RISK
This is done by estimating the likelihood of a hazardous/harmful event and the probable consequence. Take into account current risk control measures and evaluate the risk. Decide on what action is needed.
Note: For certain hazards, you many need health surveillance
For research in **overseas locations**, you will need to research location specific risks and ensure that you are covered by the University's travel insurance.

REVIEW and UPDATE
Review the risk assessment

Consider additional controls, if required, to reduce the risk further. What is the residual risk? What is the date achieved?

Record your findings on the risk assessment template

PI or researcher checks the assessment has been completed to a satisfactory standard and signs it off.

MONITOR
Monitor the research activities and regularly check the risk assessments, protocols and safe working procedures to ensure they are adequate and reflect the actual work taking place.
Note: Take into account health surveillance results because they monitor how effective your control are in protecting people from certain workplace hazards

Yes ↑

Have there been any significant changes in the equipment, substances, procedures or research sites; new information; changes in legislation or good practice? Has there been an incident or near miss?

— No →

Yes (right side path)