

Imperial College Union Policy Risk Assessment Policy & Key Principles

Audience: All Staff
Owner(s): Leadership Group
Created Date: April 2021
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Date Approved:
Approving body:

1. Policy statement

Imperial College Union is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its members, staff, customers, suppliers, visitors and all others who may be affected by its activities.

Imperial College Union recognises that good management of health, safety and welfare is essential to the success of the organisation and is a sign of a well-managed organisation.

Imperial College Union is committed to ensuring that procedures are in place to identify hazards, assess risk and set objectives to improve the management of health, safety and welfare.

Imperial College Union acknowledges its duty to ensure that all relevant legislation regarding health, safety and welfare is adhered to and that resources are made available to ensure health, safety and welfare.

Imperial College Union is committed to developing a positive safety culture, based on the involvement of staff and volunteers in health and safety management. Imperial College Union will therefore use consultative forums and mechanisms to involve staff and volunteers in health and safety management, and will endeavour to provide relevant training to all staff and students.

Imperial College Union commits to reviewing this policy at least every 2 years, or as and when necessary, with approval for the policy to take place at the Board of Trustees.

2. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to enable Imperial College Union to meet its duty of care to students and staff (and others) by creating a culture of undertaking risk assessments to reduce the risks of activities, as far as is reasonably practicable. The aim is to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff, visitors and others affected by our operations.

This policy and associated procedures provide a framework for staff to follow in the completion of risk assessments. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 dictate that the College has an absolute duty to carry out risk assessments and record significant findings in writing. Risk assessments must be 'suitable and sufficient'.

Imperial College Union must take a proactive approach to managing risk and thereby reduce the likelihood that staff, students and others will be harmed through negligence and lack of foresight or proper planning.

Risk assessments focus on prevention, as opposed to reacting when things go wrong, it is therefore possible to prevent accidents and injuries that could ruin lives, damage reputations and cost money. Once a risk assessment has been completed the significant risks must be communicated to staff and others, to enable their co-operation and informed decisions.

3. Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a statutory duty on organisations to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of its employees at work and other people who may be affected by their activities, e.g., membership, volunteers, members of the public.

The Board of Trustees, as the governing body of the Union, has overall and final responsibility for Health and Safety matters within the Union and for ensuring that Health and Safety legislation is complied with.

The Managing Director

The Managing Director has delegated responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the Health and Safety Policy and associated policies. As required by the 'Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1993' the Managing Director is named as the 'competent person' who will ensure compliance with Health and Safety. In particular the MD is responsible for:

- The setting of Health and Safety standards and objectives.
- The allocation of the necessary financial resources.
- Identifying and allocating Health and Safety responsibilities to Senior Managers / Departmental Heads.

Leadership Team Lead

The Managing Director will delegate to a membership of the leadership team the following responsibility:

- Ensuring general risk assessments are undertaken and made available to all employees.
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of Health and Safety activities and the Union's Health and Safety Policy and associated policies and procedures, and for ensuring that, at the strategic level, performance standards and timescales are adhered to.
- Ensuring accidents are investigated and reported to the Board of Trustees.
- Putting in place arrangements to monitor the maintenance of the premises and equipment.
- Chairing the Students' Union's Operational Health and Safety Committee and ensuring it has the time, facilities and resources to carry out its business effectively.
- Keeping under review this Health and Safety Policy and the Health and Safety performance of the Union.

Line Managers

Health and Safety is a delegated line management responsibility requiring managers to undertake operational Health and Safety duties identified in this Policy and individual policies and procedures associated with Health and Safety. All Departmental Heads will be trained in relevant Health & Safety courses (i.e., Risk Assessment, COSHH) and where appropriate (CIEH, NEBOSH) to ensure areas/ teams are managed safely.

Line Managers are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that departmental activities are conducted in accordance with Union policy, legislative, and other formal standards and that those hazards having the potential to cause harm are risk assessed and identified controls are implemented.
- Ensuring that employees receive sufficient information, training and supervision on Health and Safety matters.
- Producing safe systems of work and the means for complying with this Policy and other individual policies and procedures associated with Health and Safety.
- Where necessary, organising supervision to control the working environment and the maintenance of safe standards.
- Investigating accidents, or near misses, to establish causes and prevent recurrence.
- The Health and Safety induction of new staff, volunteers and students and ensuring that information, instruction and training are provided to meet individually identified needs.
- Identifying and monitoring the adequacy of the specific Health and Safety responsibilities of staff and students.
- Reviewing the above arrangements at regular intervals, making adjustments as necessary.

Individual Members of Staff, Volunteers, Students and Visitors

Individual members of staff, students and visitors have a legal duty to co-operate and comply at all times with the Health and Safety information, instruction and training provided. They must bring to the attention of their line manager or duty manager, without delay, any hazards identified, or improvements identified as necessary. Students should report hazards to the Union helpdesk or a member of Union staff.

If a hazard is seen, it should be removed or dealt with as soon as possible if it is safe to do so. It should also be reported using the Unions incident reporting system as a matter of priority.

Individual members of staff and students have a duty to take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of themselves and for other persons whom their actions or omissions may affect. Specifically, no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare. Serious breaches of the Health and Safety Policy (e.g., misusing equipment, deliberately putting someone else's safety in danger) will be dealt with through the relevant Union Disciplinary Procedure.

Individuals must take responsibility for being aware of fire hazards, knowing the location of fire exits, the assembly point and the fire drill instructions. All new employees to the organisation will be inducted in Fire Safety and the Evacuation Procedure immediately upon commencing employment.

Health and Safety matters may also be raised by any employee at 1-2-1 meetings, team meetings and at Town Hall meetings, which occur regularly.

Operational Health and Safety Committee

The Operational Health and Safety Committee will meet at least once per term, although additional meetings may be called by the Managing Director, Officer Trustees, or the Board of Trustees should the need arise. Membership of the committee will be determined by the Managing Director.

The Committee will have the following terms of reference:

- To maintain and review the measures necessary to ensure the Health and Safety of Union employees, students and others engaged in legitimate activities on its premises.
- To set and review H&S performance and objectives to improve H&S management and maintain a positive H&S culture.

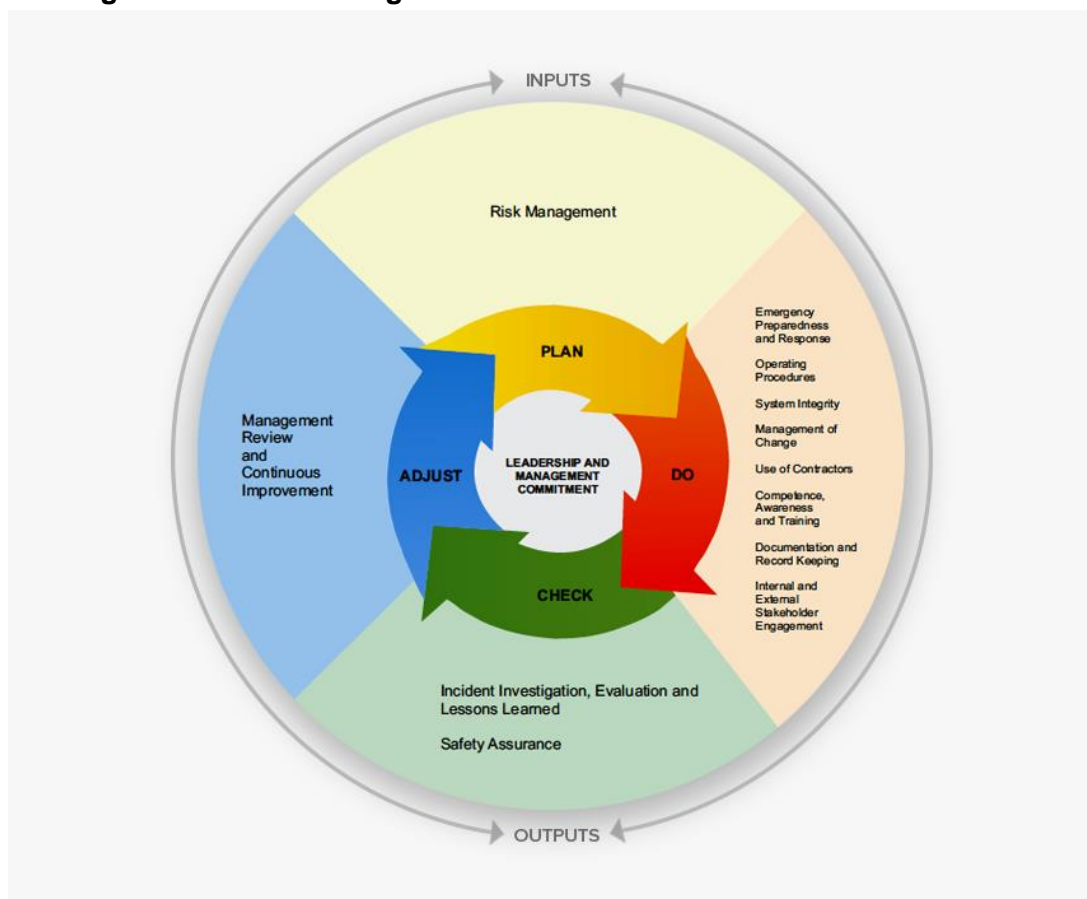
- To monitor the management processes employed within the Union to mitigate risk, notably the implementation and annual review of risk assessments.
- To monitor and review H&S related incidents, implement investigations and complete corrective action (where appropriate and necessary) in a timely manner not to exceed 6 months.
- To monitor and review the H&S audit and inspection process, both internal and external, and implement recommendations where appropriate.
- To monitor and review the adequacy and implementation of H&S related training, awareness and competency standards.
- To enable complaints and reports from employees to be investigated, remedial action to be implemented, and response provided.
- To submit an annual report to the Board of Trustees summarizing the committee's output and effectiveness.

In addition to the Operational Health and Safety Committee, the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine the need for a sub group of the Board to take on specific governance oversight of the Union's Health and Safety activity to ensure sufficient scrutiny and consideration is given to this area of work.

4. Hazard and Risk profiling

Senior Managers will need to keep an up-to-date profile of the hazards and risks for their area of responsibility, which is used to inform the content of the local arrangements to manage these risks. The risk profile is a product of the findings of all the risk assessments carried out to manage the risks from identified hazards. This relationship is shown in the diagram below as part of the Plan, Do, Check, Adjust cycle of safety management.

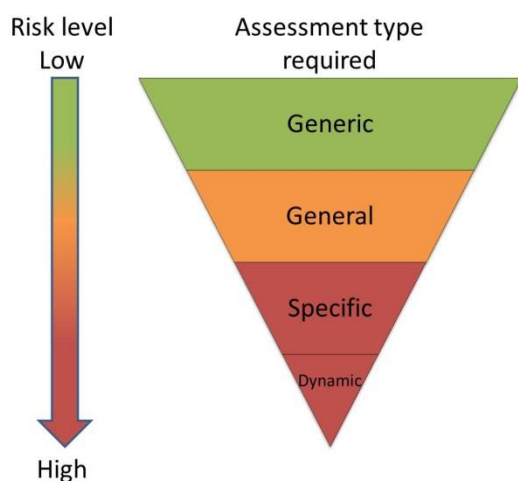
Diagram 1: Risk Profiling



5. Assessment types

An assessment of risk of the appropriate type must be carried out depending upon the nature of the activity and the level of risk, as shown in the diagram below. Only one assessment type is needed for any given activity i.e. specific assessments can be used to satisfy the need for a general one:

Diagram 2: Assessment types



Generic assessment

An assessment of risk undertaken for any work activity, irrespective of scale or complexity, where there are no legislative requirements to assess specific risks.

Specific assessment

For activities where there are legislative requirements for work with specific hazards e.g. COSHH, etc., or the activity is outside the parameters of a generic/general assessment and an aspect of control needs changing, e.g. when scaling up a chemical reaction, attending a conference in a country not covered by the generic assessment.

Dynamic assessment

When circumstances dictate that the risks in a work activity must be addressed immediately and there is a need to work differently from the way identified in the existing assessment of risk. This is particularly applicable in emergency situations and the assessment should be undertaken from a place of safety. The dynamic assessment findings do not have to be recorded immediately but used to update the existing assessment or formalized in a new assessment as necessary. Dynamic assessment must not be used 'on the job' as a substitute for other assessment types.

Justification of the Assessment of Risk

For the avoidance of doubt the assessment findings should state clearly the scope and range of activities included,

6. Identifying hazards

It is a requirement that all hazards are identified and the associated risk of harm determined and controlled from design and procurement, throughout use and disposal. This concept applies equally to all work activity, whether it is designing a new building or to individual tasks. However, the scale and scope of the assessment should be proportionate to the risks involved.

7. Arrangements - Controlling the risk of harm

Imperial College Union has to have appropriate and effective arrangements in place for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of identified risks and their control.

These arrangements form the health and safety management system identified in the continuous improvement cycle shown in Diagram 1 above. The four stages of the management cycle are described below.

Plan

Adequate thought at the planning stage of any work e.g. building proposal, funding application etc. will serve as a preliminary assessment of risk and aid the identification of major requirements: e.g. suitable facilities, equipment needed, training etc

Do

As work proceeds the controls and processes identified in the planning stages must be implemented. The assessment of risk for specific activities should be used to devise and define safe ways of working.

Check

Once work commences checks are required to ensure people are working in the way specified, that controls are being used properly and are effective and if not, ensure corrective action is identified.

Adjust

Where the monitoring activity highlights the need for change this should be incorporated by revising the current practice to implement the change.

8. Hierarchy of control measures

The following hierarchy of control is a system for controlling risks in the workplace. The hierarchy of control is a step-by-step approach to eliminating or reducing risks and it ranks risk controls from the highest level of protection and reliability through to the lowest and least reliable protection.

1	Elimination	Redesign the job or substitute a substance so that the hazard is removed or eliminated.
2	Substitution	Replace the material or process with a less hazardous one.
3	Engineering controls	For example, use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where you cannot avoid working at height, install or use local exhaust ventilation to control risks from chemicals or fume or separate the hazard from operators by methods such as enclosing or guarding dangerous items of machinery/equipment. Give priority to measures which protect a number of people over individual measures.
4	Administrative Controls	These are about identifying and implementing the procedures you need to work safely. For example: reducing the time workers are exposed to hazards (eg by job rotation); prohibiting use of mobile phones in hazardous areas; increasing safety signage, and performing risk assessments.
5	Personal protective clothes and equipment (PPE)	Only after all the previous measures have been tried and found ineffective in controlling risks to a reasonably practicable level, must personal protective equipment (PPE) be used. For example, where you cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall (should one occur). If chosen, PPE should be selected and fitted by the person who uses it. Workers must be trained in the function and limitation of each item of PPE.

9. Recording the assessment findings

Just as there are different types of risk assessment, so there are different ways of recording the findings from an assessment. For the majority of purposes, the Imperial College risk assessment template and associated guidance can be used to record the findings.

Documenting the findings should be functional and concise, with an emphasis on effectiveness rather than paperwork. The focus should be on actually controlling risks rather than implementing the recording system.

Therefore, alternative templates or recording methods, e.g. incorporation into a Standard Operating Procedure, may be used provided they address the same points.

All risk assessments are to be stored in an accessible place.

10. Review

The Policy Owner is responsible for conducting a comprehensive review of their policies at a minimum of every 3 years or as required to stay current with applicable laws and/or Imperial College Policies.

The purpose of the review is to determine:

- if the policy is still necessary and accurate;
- if the policy should be combined with another policy or if it should be rescinded;
- if the policy is up to date with current laws and regulations and Imperial College policies;
- if changes are required to improve the effectiveness or clarity of the policy;

11. Training

All new members of staff are given an induction into the Imperial College Union's arrangements for risk assessments and health and safety. Specialist training is given to those whose work requires it.

All staff responsible for completing risk assessments will be provided with training to provide them with the knowledge and understanding of the risk assessment process and the skills required to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

Imperial College Union provides professional training courses for staff, e.g. First Aid at Work. All staff receive regular induction and refresher training in risk assessments tailored to their specific areas.

Line Managers and Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring their staff are briefed on risks specific to their department and the control measures to be used to protect the health and safety of pupils and staff.

Risk assessments should be used to identify further staff training needs to enable them to work safely.