**Risk Assessment Step by Step Guide**

**Why does a risk assessment need to be completed?**

The University is required by law to assess reasonably foreseeable risks arising out of its work and to put in place control measures to reduce the risks so far as is reasonably practicable. The best way for the University and its staff to do this is by completing a risk assessment.

This is in line with the UoB H&S Policy which can be found here.

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/policy/hspolicies.aspx>

**When should a risk assessment be carried out?**

When (at what point) should a risk assessment be completed?

All risk assessments should be carried out and approved before the activity that is being assessed begins and before significant exposure to any risk. For example, if you are planning to travel abroad a risk assessment should be written and approved at the relevant level (see the approval section) before any travel begins.

When should a risk assessment be submitted for approval?

Risk assessments should be submitted in advance of the activity taking place so that it can be approved. The approval process can take time and risk assessments should be submitted to the relevant approver in accordance with the following timeframes:

* Level 1 – 1 week
* Level 2 – 2 weeks
* Level 3 – 2 weeks

What circumstances require a risk assessment?

A risk assessment should be carried out for each activity that is being undertaken by UoB staff or students which could present risks to those involved with the activity. This can range from staff and students working off site e.g. on a field trip, to manual handling in the office.

Where activities occur regularly e.g. annual field trips or manual handling, they can be covered by one risk assessment (per activity), a new risk assessment does not need to be created each time the activity is undertaken. Instead the assessment just needs to be reviewed annually or whenever there is a change in the activity e.g. new equipment or travel information.

**How do I complete a risk assessment?**

Who should complete a risk assessment?

It is the responsibility of line managers, PI’s, lead researcher and supervisory staff including PGR Supervisors to ensure that activities under their control or within their research are risk assessed and result in reliable and effective risk controls which are communicated to relevant staff/students or others involved. Where completed jointly by a Supervisor and PGR student, include both names as the Risk Assessor.

All risk assessors should attend the appropriate risk assessment training. For information about the training resources available for risk assessments please follow this link and select the ‘General Safety Courses (risk assessment) tab: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/courses/index.aspx>

What forms do I need to use?

There is a risk assessment template, provided by UoB Safety Services, available on the intranet via the link below. Please use this when completing your risk assessment, it is called ‘risk assessment form including matrix’. <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/topics/riskassessment.aspx>

For risk assessments involving overseas travel, travellers are encouraged to complete a Pre - Travel Health Questionnaire form created by Occupational Health each time they travel. If a traveller does not wish to complete this form, they must notify Occupational Health via [occupationalhealth@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:occupationalhealth@contacts.bham.ac.uk) , CAL Facilities and their School admin teams. The form can be obtained from your school admin team, PGR administration team or CAL Facilities via [artsreception@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:artsreception@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

For staff travelling abroad, CAL Facilities have created a generic travel risk assessment that can be used by all staff. The risk assessment covers the typical hazards an individual may encounter whilst traveling, however specific details relating to the traveller/s e.g. medical conditions must be added. It is designed to act as a starting point for the risk assessment to which individuals either remove hazards that are not present or add others in.

The generic assessment has been circulated to your school/PGR admin teams and is available from the CAL Facilities team who can be contacted via [artsreception@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:artsreception@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

The CAL Facilities team can also provide additional support if required with the completion of risk assessments.

Where do I need to send the risk assessment?

Once the risk assessment and any associated forms have been completed they need to be approved and submitted accordingly. When submitting the forms, the risk assessor should confirm which approval level they think is required (please see the Approval section for full details and guidance).

In all cases, please submit the risk assessment, and the Approval Guidance Matrix (see approval section) to the following teams:

* Your school administration team. PGR students please send them to the PGR Administration team via [calpg-research@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:calpg-research@contacts.bham.ac.uk)
* CAL Facilities – [artsreception@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:artsreception@contacts.bham.ac.uk)
* For research risk assessments please also include the CAL Research team – [calresearchkt@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:calresearchkt@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

CAL RKT will support the risk assessment process for all research trips and to do so they require the following additional information:

* A description of the purpose of the trip e.g. is it archival research, field work or conference attendance.
* Timing of the trip
* Essential nature of the trip, this only applies during the current pandemic as travel to amber countries can only be approved if essential.

In order for CAL RKT to support risk assessments and travel, particularly during the pandemic, please submit to them along with your risk assessment a brief document detailing the information above.

Please send the Occupational Health Pre Travel Questionnaire (if completed) to Occupational Health only via [occupationalhealth@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:occupationalhealth@contacts.bham.ac.uk) where it will be reviewed by Health Professionals and kept under strict GDPR rules.

If you are travelling overseas please also contact Ben Atkins in the CAL Marketing Team and inform him of your destination. This is to let the CAL Marketing team know of any marketing opportunities that they may seek to collaborate on.

Once the forms are submitted the CAL Facilities team will co-ordinate any feedback from the CAL Research Team to the risk assessor.

**How is a Risk Assessment approved?**

There are 3 levels of approval for risk assessments;

**Level 1** – S**elf-approval or Supervisor Approval for PGR’s** – this is for low risk activities and research, or certain repeat work where there is high confidence that risk controls are in place and reliable, e.g. attending a conference.   
*(Self-approval is not appropriate for PGR students who will need to gain approval from their supervisor)*.

**Level 2** - **Chair of Health and Safety Management Committee approval** **(copied to Head of School)** – this is used for higher risk activities e.g. travel to a dangerous or unstable country (FCO amber zones) and allows multiple parties to contribute to the decision increasing the visibility of the research within the local health and safety community.

**Level 3 – Head of College approval** – this is only for the very high risk activities, e.g. research with high levels of risk or travel to FCO red zones.

All travel to FCO red zones requires approval by RTAP (Research Travel Advice Panel) which will consist of; Head of College, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Knowledge Transfer, The Director of Legal Services, The Assistant Director of HR (Workplace Wellbeing). This process can take up to 2 weeks so please keep this in mind when deciding when to submit your risk assessment for approval.

To select the correct level of approval please use the Approval Guidance Document which is available from the link below. The form is in the following section ‘Approval of Risk Assessments and RAMPs’ and is called ‘Guidance on selecting the Risk Assessment and RAMP approval option. section: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/policy/Research-Risk-Assessment-and-Mitigation-Plans-RAMPs.aspx>

For further advice please contact the CAL Facilities team via [artsreception@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:artsreception@contacts.bham.ac.uk) or for research projects the CAL Research Team via [calresearchkt@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:calresearchkt@contacts.bham.ac.uk) .

Risk assessments and Ethics

Health and safety risk assessment approval and Ethics approval are two separate items. If required a health and safety risk assessment should be developed and approved at the appropriate level prior to the research proposal being presented for ethics review. For further advice please see the table via the link below in the ‘Relationship between the Health and Safety Process and Ethics Approval’ section:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/policy/Research-Risk-Assessment-and-Mitigation-Plans-RAMPs.aspx>