Risk Assessment

Fieldwork and other hazardous activities
Risk Assessment

• What is it?
• Why is it needed?
• Where does it apply?
• Who needs to do it and to whom does it apply?
• How is it done?
• When does it need to be done?
What is Risk Assessment?

• A systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking
• Examines hazards, how they might be realised, and their potential impacts
• Provides a specific work instruction, safe system of work or safe/standard operating procedure
• A legal document
  • Defence in court
  • Stick to beat you with
Why is it needed?

• Makes work safer
• Legal requirement and University policy
• Communication tool
• Informs requirements for training, health surveillance, maintenance etc.
Where, and to what does it apply?

- All university activities involving significant risks
- Laboratories
- Workshops
- Estates & Facilities
- The more mundane… manual handling, computers, stress

**BUT**

- Out of sight, out of mind
  - Fieldwork
  - Travel & transport
  - Placement, exchanges & collaboration
Who is responsible; who is involved?

“Employer”

- Delegated responsibility through line management
  - Head of School
  - Principal Investigator
  - Supervisor
  - Solo researcher

- Closest understanding of the tasks and risks
- Supervising safe working
- All workers should sign – understanding of significant findings
- Parents of under 18s
- Authorisation/verification
Method

• 5 steps
  • Identify hazards
  • Decide who might be harmed and how
  • Evaluate risks and decide on precautions
  • Record significant findings
  • Review and update

• What about less predictable events?
When, and how often?

**General Risk Assessment**
- Before work starts!
- When work changes
- When risks (or knowledge thereof) change
- When there is cause for doubt, e.g. accidents
- Periodically – best practice is annually

**Fieldwork & Travel**
- Before travel is booked!
- When circumstances or itineraries change
- When risk or threat levels change, including in-country
- Immediately before travel
- Dynamic assessment in the field
- Review/debrief
Fieldwork Risk Assessment - Planning

• Applies to all travel
• Making case to go – not safety-related
• Gathering emergency contact and itinerary details
  • Accommodation
  • Transport
  • Destinations and stop-overs
• Risk Overview
  • Low – life hazards equivalent to UK
  • Moderate – risks higher but controlled
  • High – well above UK sedentary working and uncontrollable
**Risk Overview**

Place an ‘X’ for each **Risk Category** (below) in the most appropriate column to the right hand side, based on the **Guidance Notes** below...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Category</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political risks / civil unrest / terrorism / conflict / sanctions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corruption / state harassment / wrongful detention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime / violence / theft / harassment / kidnapping / cyber</td>
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<td>Customs / local laws / reprisals against local helpers</td>
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<td>Disease / infection / vaccinations / water / food / allergies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weather / climate / natural disaster</td>
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<td>Medical facilities / emergency response / evacuation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications / telephony / digital connectivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure / transport / accommodation / money</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazards related to the specific work activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (please specify...)</td>
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</table>

The level of risk from this trip is...
## Detailed Risk Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Category (from Section B)</th>
<th>Infrastructure / transport / accommodation / money</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk Rating (from Section B)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Key risk issues to address    | Poor road surfaces and lack of street lighting in rural areas  
                            | Taxis are unregulated and poorly maintained  
                            | Possible difficulties in accessing cash in rural areas  
                            | No automatic fire alarm in camp |
| Key control measures which are already in place | 1. Travel during daylight hours and take mobile phone for emergencies  
            | 2. Use only transport recommended by local contacts and travel in groups  
            | 3. Leave note of travel plans with responsible person at camp  
            | 4. Take minimum sufficient cash and use camp safe wherever possible  
            | 5. Pay up front for ongoing costs so far as possible  
            | 6. Establish distance and cost of reaching nearest cash machine or bank  
            | 7. Acquaint self with fire escape routes from accommodation |
| Any actions required to put in place extra control measures | 1. Obtain meeting point at airport and secure means of identifying contact |
| Any residual problems which we cannot fully address | Fire detection relies on someone spotting fire and shouting  
                                                     | Some travel might be required at dusk due to needs of research |
Authorisation and Escalation

• Fieldwork should have approval throughout the management chain: why?
  • “The FCO advises against all but essential travel
• Head of School (or person/group with his/her authority)
• All High Risk fieldwork to me
• Uncontrollable/unmitigated risks against official advice go to Fieldwork Risk Management Group (4x PO members)
Insurance

• All low risk and moderate risk trips are automatically insured
• Clinical trials
• FCO advisories
• Sanctions