



University of
St Andrews

Guidance on the health and safety aspects of young people at work

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Guidance on Health and Safety Aspects of Young People at Work

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

(Revised April 2008)

Introduction:

The University has long taken account of any special needs which arise from the employment of young persons. To date this has been done by means of the normal work assessment process, which is carried out by Schools/Units prior to the beginning of any work activity. Legislation, known as The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, has been introduced which requires the implementation of a more formal arrangement.

The procedure given in this document has been devised to allow the requirements of the new legislation to be implemented in a simple and consistent manner.

Scope and Principal Requirements of the Regulations:

The intention of the new Regulations is to ensure the health and safety of young persons at work. They apply whenever anyone under the age of 18 is at work. In this context the legal definition of "at work" includes:

- Work under a contract of employment (e.g. work as a University employee)
- Participation in a "work experience" scheme (i.e. schoolchildren on work experience placements)
- Participation in a "training for employment" scheme.

The Regulations require particular consideration be given to the activities that young persons may carry out, with a view to identifying and controlling any risks to their health and safety that may exist as a result of their age. Guidance on the risk factors that particularly affect young persons and on how to record such an assessment is given in the following sections.

Definitions

A Young Person - Is anybody under the age of 18 years old

A Child - A child is anyone who has not reached the official age at which they may leave School i.e. just before or just after their 16th Birthday.

NOTE: The Regulations do not apply to the activities of individuals who are undertaking a formal course of study provided by the University (e.g. Undergraduates under 18 years old).

Vetting staff Working with Young Persons and Child Protection Policies

The University's policy on the above subject is as follows:

'Staff and volunteers working with children under 18 and vulnerable adults may be required to disclose their criminal convictions in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act as amended. Staff responsible for such activities must notify the Vice-Principal with responsibility for human Resources matter, who will assess what further actions, if any, are required.'

Risk Assessments

Assessing the Risks

NOTE: Under health and safety legislation, you must assess the risks to young people under 18 years old, before, they start work/work experience and tell them what the risks are.

Management of the School/Unit should:

- Take into account that these young people are likely to be inexperienced, unaware of health and safety risks and physically and mentally immature;
- Put into place control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks of the work activities;
- Let parents/guardians of any students (and employees) below the minimum school leaving age know the key findings of the risk assessments and the control measures to be taken before the young person starts work / work experience; and
- Keep a record of the main findings of the risk assessment.

The risk assessment will need to cover:

- Cover all necessary features listed in the following section;
- Keep the risk assessment up to date;
- Review the risk assessment if you have reason to believe that the original assessment no longer holds good; and
- Bear in mind any information about the Young Person's needs which may be passed on by the experience organiser, the School/Unit and/or the parents.

An example of a Young Person's work experience blank risk assessment form is given in Appendix 1.

Special Features of the Risk Assessment

The law requires you to take account of all risks in your risk assessment before a young person starts work or work experience.

Try to look at your workplace from an adolescent's point of view. What dangers will they recognise? They may not be fully grown - will they find their workplace awkward and tools too big?

In particular you should look at:

- How the workplace is fitted and laid out (and the particular site where they will work);
- What type of equipment will be used and how will it be handled;
- How the work is organised;
- The need to assess and provide health and safety training;
- The nature of any physical, biological and chemical agents they may be exposed to, for how long and to what extent; and
- The risks from certain hazards (You will find further information on the nature of specific risks to young people in the HSE publication entitled: 'Young People at Work: A guide for employers'. This guide includes any work that young people cannot do because of their age).

You must not allow the young person to do the work where you find that a significant risk remains in spite of your best efforts to take all reasonable steps to control it.

An example of a young person's work experience blank risk assessment form is given in Appendix 1.

Outcome of the Risk Assessment

Your risk assessment may bring to light certain risks which young people cannot be exposed to under health and safety legislation.

You must protect your young employees and work experience students from the risk of accidents and/or ill health which they are unlikely to recognise themselves because:

- They are inexperienced;
- They have not been trained;
- They may not pay enough attention to health and safety.

Restrictions on Work

The overall rule is that young people under 18 years old must not be allowed to do work which:

- Cannot be adapted to meet any physical and mental limitations they may have;
- Exposes them to substances which are toxic or may cause cancer;
- Exposes them to radiation;
- Involves extreme heat, noise or vibration.

Young people who are over the minimum school leaving age can do the above work under very special circumstances, which are:

- The work is necessary for their training;
- The work is properly supervised by a competent person; and
- The risks are reduced to the lowest possible level, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Children below the minimum school leaving age must never do work involving the above risks whether they are employed or under training such as work experience.

Training and Supervision

Young people need training most when they start a job or work experience. They need to be trained to do the work without putting themselves or others at risk.

It is important that you check that they have understood training which covers for example:

- The hazards and risks in a workplace;
- The control measures put in place to protect their health and safety;
- A basic introduction to health and safety, for example, first-aid, fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures.

Young people will be facing unfamiliar risks from the job they will be doing and from their surroundings and are therefore likely to need more supervision than adults. Good supervision will also help you get a clear idea of the young person's progress in their job and to monitor the effectiveness of their training.

Action required where young persons are at work (16-18 age group):

Within the University young people in the 16-18 years age group are employed within several staff categories (e.g. technical, secretarial). Schools/Units should be aware that risks to persons within this age group may differ from those affecting adults for the reasons indicated above. It is sufficient to take such differences into account as an integral part of the existing School/Unit arrangements for risk assessment. If special, or more stringent control measures (e.g. closer supervision, training) are identified as being appropriate for younger workers this finding should be recorded using existing School/Unit arrangements and the necessary actions implemented.

Young persons, including children, should be told about the risks to their health and safety identified by the assessment and the control measures put in place to minimise risk.

Additional action required where children are at work (under 16 age group):

This category principally includes schoolchildren who are on work experience placement within the University. Any work with under 16 year olds must comply with the University's [Safeguarding of children, vulnerable adults and prevention of radicalisation policy](#)

As a result of the Regulations the University, as provider of the work experience placement, must provide the parent/guardian of the child with information about the potential risks to the child's health and safety and the preventative measures which will be in place to guard against these risks during the work experience placement. Arrangements for getting this information to parents or guardians may be made through the school.

Arrangements for risk assessment of work experience placements involving those under 16:

When a Head of School/Unit agrees to provide a work experience placement the following actions should be taken:

1. The Head of School/Unit shall nominate a senior member of staff to act as Placement Supervisor. The role of the Placement Supervisor is to oversee proper conduct of the health and safety aspects of the work experience placement.
2. The Placement Supervisor will notify the School/Unit Safety Co-ordinator that a work experience placement is to take place. The Safety Co-ordinator will maintain a list of such placements within the School/Unit and will provide the Placement Supervisor with a copy of the placement risk assessment form (link to File RTF Placement risk assessment form (RTF, 6 KB))
3. After appropriate consultation within the School/Unit, the Placement Supervisor will decide in which activities the child will participate during their work experience. The Placement Supervisor will complete the risk assessment form (with assistance from Environmental, Health and Safety Services staff if required). This form will explain, in simple terms likely to be understood by laypersons, the nature of the hazards to which the child may be exposed during their work experience and how the risks from these hazards will be controlled during the placement.
4. The Placement Supervisor will arrange for two copies of the risk assessment form (link to File RTF Placement risk assessment form (RTF, 6 KB)) to be generated. One copy should be retained by the School/Unit.

The other copy must be sent, by the Placement Supervisor, to the child's parent/guardian, either directly or via the School Placement Organiser, prior to the commencement of the work experience placement. This is essential in order to meet the University's legal obligations.

Depending on the nature of the activities carried out during work placements it may be appropriate to present the information provided in the risk assessment form (link to [File RTF Placement risk assessment form](#) (RTF, 6 KB)) on the basis of a range of potential activities which have been assessed in general terms. Emphasis should be given to explaining the measures that will be in place to ensure that the child does not suffer harm during the placement. It is particularly important to record the level of training and supervision which will be provided. The risk assessment form must also provide a School/Unit contact name (normally the Placement Supervisor) and a telephone number. Parents/guardians should be encouraged to use this contact to discuss any concerns which they may have about the placement.

Further information:

Further information is provided in the Health and Safety Executive Publication "Young people at work - a guide for employers" (1) and assistance on the health and safety aspects of young persons in the workplace can be obtained by contacting Environmental, Health and Safety Services (Ext. 2751).

Reference:

- 1 Young people at work - A guide for employers. 1997 HSE Books ISBN 0 7176 1285 6. Available from HSE Books PO Box 1999, Sudbury CO10 6FS. Telephone 01787 881165. Priced £7.95. (Also available from Dillons and John Smith Bookshops).
- 2 The Right Start - Work Experience for Young People: Health and Safety Basics for Employers (INDG 364). HSE Books. ISBN: 0 7176 2547 8 (2002)

WORK PLACEMENT RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

School/Unit

Head of School/Unit

Placement Supervisor

TRAINEE DETAILS

Name: **Age**

Address:

School:

Emergency Contact Name:

Emergency Contact Number:

SECTION A - Description of activities

The activities which will be carried out by the trainee are as follows:-

The trainee will be carrying out some of the following activities depending on the particular work pattern at the time of the placement.

1.

2.

3.

4.

SECTION B - Hazards associated with the activities

*The hazards that are listed below may be encountered in association with the activities detailed above.
An explanation of the hazard and its method of control is given under each item indicated*

SECTION C - General precautions for protection of trainee from risk

The following general precautions will be taken to prevent the trainee suffering harm from the hazards indicated.

Training:

Supervision:

Protective Equipment:

Signature of Assessor: Date

Signature of Placement Supervisor: Date
(if different from Assessor)

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this placement, please contact:

..... Tel No.

SECTION D - To be completed by Parent/Guardian

Please sign below to acknowledge receipt of the Risk Assessment and return this section of the form to the University Placement Supervisor.

Thank you for providing a copy of the Risk Assessment for my son/daughter:

Name

Signature Date
(Parent/Guardian)

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