RISK ASSESSMENTS

Society activity is covered by our Insurance policy, which requires risk assessments to be completed for all events. We ask society leads to do this, because you are the ones present during an event and as a result you need to be aware of the steps that need to be taken to make your event psychologically and physically safe. We are here to support you in this.

In the first instance of an unauthorised, not-risk assessed event taking place, you will receive a warning. If it happens again, we may withdraw support for the Society temporarily or permanently.

This guide will explain what a Risk Assessment is, how to complete one and what to do if an accident occurs at your event.

We recognise this is one of the most difficult parts of being a society officer - if you have any concerns please speak to the SU and we can help you with filling out your risk assessment.

Risk Assessments (RA's) are a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. RA's are more than a form, they are a process:

Identify the hazards associated with an activity

Analyse the consequences (eg. physical injury)

Calculate the level of risk, with reference to the likelihood of the hazard causing harm, and the severity of the potential harm

Identify and implement control mechanisms that reduce the risk in one of two ways

Reducing the likelihood and/or Reducing the severity

Risk has been reduced or eliminated

The RA form reflects the above process, and we will review each step in more detail.

When do I need to complete a risk assessment?

Most societies have a **core activity, for example:**

- Volleyballs core activity is training at UEA Sports park
- Film Socs core activity is film screenings in DS20
- Chess Club's core activity is playing Chess in St Andrews

At the start of the year/your time as a society lead, you will complete a risk assessment that covers your core activity for the whole year. If you run an event or meet which is substantially different to your core activity (eg. new venue, new activity or new element) a new RA must be filled in, for example when

- Volleyball play a competitive game
- Film Socs go to the cinema
- Chess Club go on a pub crawl

If your society does not have a core activity, each event will require a new RA, and planning your term ahead can be really useful to manage this.

Identify the hazards associated with an activity

HAZARD = anything that has the potential to cause harm

There are six main types of hazards, those highlighted in blue are the ones you are most likely to come across:

Mechanical - created by powered operation or apparatus or tools (eg sewing machine)	**Physical - substances or conditions that may harm your physical safety (eg. spillage)**	**Chemical - substances which are dangerous due to their intrinsic properties or generation of waste product (eg. saw dust)**
Organisational - hazards associated with behaviour and people	**Environmental - conditions or events that effect your environment and adversely affect peoples health (eg. loud noise or temperature)**	**Biological - organic substances or micro-organisms that pose a threat (eg. food hygiene or animals)**

The first page of your risk assessment will have a checklist with some hazards that may be associated with your activity. Tick those that apply, but remember that this is not an exhaustive list so consider whether there are any other hazards that may come up. When thinking about what other hazards may be involved, remember:

L E A P

LOCATION | EQUIPMENT | ACTIVITY | PEOPLE

Analyse the potential hazard (eg. physical injury)

Consequences take place when someone or something interacts with the hazard and creates a hazardous event. Your RA should consider:

- who faces the consequence (eg. students, staff, passerbys)
- how they are harmed (physical injury such as broken leg, property damage such as broken equipment or reputational damage to the society/SU)
- and the details of harm

for example, a hazard associated with most events will be trips and slips, as trip hazards can be anywhere. the consequence of this could be faced by students attending or passerbys, there could be physical injury such as broken bones or bruises or damaged property depending what was tripped on

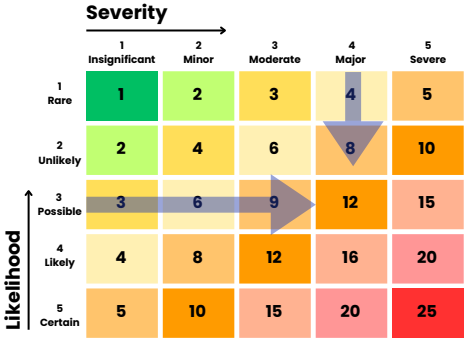
Calculate the level of risk, with reference to the likelihood of the hazard causing harm, and the severity of the potential harm

A hazardous event has a likelihood of happening and the consequence has a severity of injury. You use these two factors to calculate the level of risk with the below risk calculator.

LIKELIHOOD X SEVERITY = RISK

Likelihood \ Severity	1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Severe
1 Rare	1	2	3	4	5
2 Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
3 Possible	3	6	9	12	15
4 Likely	4	8	12	16	20
5 Certain	5	10	15	20	25

*for example, if the likelihood of someone tripping during a social event in the SU Lounge is **3 - Possible,** and the severity of injury could be **4 - Major**, the risk is **12.** A risk level of 16 is not acceptable, which is why we implement control mechanisms.*



When estimating the severity and likelihood, think about what is not an unreasonable possibility. You can use the below guidelines to help you understad severity:

Insignificant - first aid injury, such as minor cuts or bruises
Minor - short term injuries, such as cuts that require stitches
Moderate - significant longer term injuries, such as broken bones
Major - permanent life changing injury, such as brain injuries or severance
Severe - death

Identify and implement control mechanisms that reduce the risk in one of two ways

Reducing the likelihood and/or Reducing the severity

To reduce risk you can either **reduce the likelihood** or **reduce the severity.** Sometimes you can do both.

We do this with control measures, which vary in effectiveness. You should prioritise using more effective control measures

More Effective

Eliminating the Hazard - eg. removing trip hazards out of walk ways or turning off flashing lights

Substitution - eg. using a trolley to transport items rather than carrying them

Preventing Contact (through distance or enclosure) - eg. moving to a different space or storing tools safely in containers rather than loose

Safe Systems of Work (SSOW) - eg. laying out ground rules at events/digital spaces or providing content warnings

Least Effective

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - eg. appropriate footwear and clothing during training

for example, going back to our example, we can reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls by:

ensuring bags and coats are kept underneath tables or in a corner to prevent trip hazards (this eliminates a part of the hazard, and reduces the likelihood of consequence)

ensuring all cables are safely tucked away rather than being spread throughout the room (this prevents contact with the hazard, and thus reduces the likelihood of injury)

reporting any issues with the room that could cause a trip or slip hazard (this eliminates the risk and thus reduces the likelihood of the consequence)

knowing how to contact a first aider in the space you are in (this is a SSOW and can reduce the severity of the consequence as the injured person can be seen to before their condition worsens)

Risk has been reduced or eliminated

Once we have identified with control measures we can implement, we re-calculate the risk. If the risk has not been reduced, you need to implement additional control measures.

*for example, after we have implemented the above control measures, the likelihood drops to **2 - Unlikely**, the severity drops to **3 - Moderate**, the resultant risk is **6***

So what do I do if an accident occurs at my event?

If an accident occurs and someone is injured, you should seek a first aider.

At an external venue, y**ou should ask a member of staff at the start of the event** how to get a first aider to you if you need one.

If you are on campus you can **contact reception during officer hours, or the duty manager out of hours,** and inform them that you need a first aider and which building you are in. Look out for these posters around campus which will help you contact them.

Once the situation has been handled, and it is reasonable for you to do so, you should report the accident to the SU via the Accident Reporting Form. You can find a link to this on the committee hub. We will contact you and the injured party to make sure everyone is okay.

You need to report all accidents and near misses, so if someone falls over but is not injured you should still let us know. The purpose of this is so we can prevent near misses from becoming accidents in the future.

Let's go over one more example

Identify the hazards associated with an activity

Food Hygiene and Food Allergens

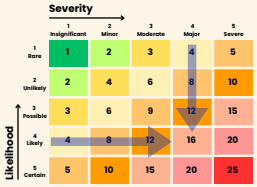
Analyse the consequences (eg. physical injury)

Students who consume improperly prepared food could become ill with food poisoning, depending on what is served this could be fatal. Students with allergies who consume the food or are in the vicinity could become seriously ill, potentially die

Calculate the level of risk, with reference to the likelihood of the hazard causing harm, and the severity of the potential harm

The likelihood of someone becoming ill or having an allergic reaction with no control measures is **4 - Likely.** The severity could be **4 - Major.**

The risk, therefore, is 16.



Identify and implement control mechanisms that reduce the risk through reduce the likelihood (RL) or severity (RS)

Encourage people to bring only pre-packaged food that is in date and unopened (RL)
Keep original packaging so people can check for allergens (RL)
Avoid common allergens such as peanuts (RL)
Gather people's dietary requirements before the event to check if anything needs to be avoided, or if you need to provide gluten free/dairy free food (RL)
Know how to contact a first aider (RS)
If ordering food, check food hygiene certificate of restaurant and let them know if there are any allergies they should be aware of (RL)

Risk has been reduced or eliminated

The likelihood of someone becoming ill or having an allergic reaction following the control measures is **2 - Unlikely.** The severity could be **3 - Moderate**

The risk, therefore, is 6.

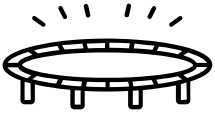
SPECIALIST RA'S
(such as sport or trips)

Some more specialist risk assessments will require more consideration. This includes sport risk assessments or higher risk activities such as trips, or creative activities that require machines or tools.

The process for writing the Risk Assessment is the same, but we encourage you to seek out risk assessment examples to help you fill out the form. The SU can help you find these.

RA'S FOR EXTERNAL EVENTS

When you are taking an your society to an external venue, you are responsible for the activity you bring to the venue and the venue is responsible for the premises.



for example, if you go to Gravity Trampoline Park

***YOU** are responsible for ensuring people are wearing appropriate clothing, know the rules of the trampoline park, know how to get there, aren't intoxicated or consuming food, reporting any spillages mess or damage to the venue, following instructions of staff during an evacuation, knowing who the first aider is (non exhaustive list)*

***GRAVITY** is responsible for checking the safety of the trampolines, keeping the building safe, having evacuation procedures in place, having a first aider on site, ensuring the safety of any food or drink they supply (non exhaustive list)*

Your risk assessment should cover the things you are responsible for and recognise that the venue also has policies that you will follow.

When working with an external venue you should always obtain a copy of their risk assessment and public liability insurance.

THATS IT ON RISK ASSESSMENTS!

We know this part of being a society officer can be daunting or even boring, but we are here to help you figure it out! Please do get in touch if you would like more guidance on Risk Assessments

NORWICH ARTS STUDENTS' UNION

Society Leads!

This document outlines some of the example control mechanisms you may use in your Risk Assessments.

Do not copy and paste full lists of control mechanisms, as they will not all apply to you. Read through the examples below and thing about which will apply to you and which ones will not.

If you can think of a control mechanism that is not on this list, still include it in your risk assessment

Club and Society Activity Risk Assessment – Example Control Mechanisms

Hazard	Example Control Mechanisms
Fire and Fire Alarm	• Ensure fire exits are clearly marked and unobstructed. • Appoint a fire marshal for large events – this person would be responsible for pointing people towards the emergency exit • Do not block fire alarms or extinguishers. • Keep flammable materials away from heat sources. • Stop activities immediately when alarm sounds and evacuate the building • Report any fire hazards to SU or the venue if event is external
Overpowered electrical outlet	• Avoid daisy-chaining extension leads. • Limit number of devices plugged into one outlet. • Use PAT-tested (Portable Appliance Testing) electrical items. • Do not use damaged cables or plugs • Report any damaged electronics or electrical outlets to the SU or the venue if the event is external
Faulty electrical equipment	• Do not use equipment that sparks, smells, or has exposed wires – report these to the SU immediately • Store equipment properly to avoid damage. • If using own equipment, request PAT test with SU
Open flames	• Prohibit open flames where possible – if necessary then limit how many are active at one time to allow greater control • Keep extinguishers or blankets nearby. • Supervise at all times. • Ensure permits or permission if required

Club and Society Activity Risk Assessment – Example Control Mechanisms

Trips, Slips and Falls (inc on spillages)	• Clean up spills immediately and display warning signs. • Tape down or remove trailing cables. • Keep walkways clear – put bags and coats entirely under tables or in a corner • Check for loose flooring or uneven surfaces – report these to the SU with photographs • Ensure adequate lighting. • Any emergency will be reported using the Accident or Near Miss form • Floor will be checked and cleared of any trip hazards or objects that could cause injury
Manual Handling	• Use trolleys, team lifts or mechanical aids where possible. • Use proper lifting techniques – eg. Lifting with knees not back • Avoid lifting heavy or awkward items alone. • Plan routes to avoid obstruction – have multiple people carrying and one person guiding to prevent crashing into things • Encourage breaks to prevent strain. • Request set up support for major manual handling or events
Travel	• Share full itinerary with all participants • Use reputable transport providers – ensure they have insurance • Collect emergency contacts and medical info on hand – to be stored by SU and any relevant information will be passed onto Society Leads. SU will be contacted as soon as it is reasonably possible in an emergency • Address of destination will be shared with attendees • Attendees encouraged to walk together/in groups particularly when it is dark • Use appropriate road crossings and follow road safety rules • Do regular head counts to ensure people are not lost or left behind • If moving between venues, Society leads and/or entrusted members will be distributed throughout the group to maintain control of group • For train travel, check any strike or cancellation updates – make a back up plan in advance • Ensure any accommodation booked is booked through a trusted supplier with good reviews
Working at height	• Use ladders only when stable and with supervision and with appropriate training – request Estates support or support from Venue • Never stand on chairs or unstable surfaces. • Secure objects that may fall.

NORWICH ARTS STUDENTS' UNION

Club and Society Activity Risk Assessment – Example Control Mechanisms

Mess	• Protect surfaces with coverings. • Provide bins and cleaning materials. • Assign cleaning responsibilities post-event. • Encourage tidy as you go. • Manage wet or sharp materials with care. • Any space used will be returned to the condition it was found in
Emergency at external venue	• Get venue emergency procedures in advance – get copy of their insurance and risk assessment • Identify nearest exits, first aid, and staff on arrival • Ensure mobile phones are charged. • Share emergency plan with attendees. • Keep SU informed of location and activity
Tools (eg. Needles, scissors, knives)	• Use tools in a supervised environment. • For specialist tools, such as sewing machines or tools in technical spaces, seek support from technicians • Store tools securely when not in use. • Keep first aid kit nearby. • Avoid unnecessary handling.
Weather (heat or adverse)	• Monitor weather forecasts prior to events. • Cancel or reschedule during extreme weather (storms, snow, high winds). • Encourage people to wear weather appropriate clothing • remind people to bring water, sunglasses and sunscreen when hot • Have a contingency/indoor plan if outdoors
Uneven ground or terrain	• Conduct a site walkover to identify risks. • Use cones or signage to mark hazards. • Advise appropriate footwear. • Avoid activity during low light conditions • Offer assistance for those with mobility needs. • Stairs should be clearly signposted – if not then report to venue/SU – edge of stair should have tape or be a different colour to show it is the edge • People should be discouraged from running up and down stairs

NORWICH ARTS STUDENTS' UNION

Club and Society Activity Risk Assessment – Example Control Mechanisms

Loud noise	• Provide ear protection if needed. • Ensure a quiet zone/area is available. • Communicate expected noise levels in event info • Respond to feedback if noise is too loud • Before playing a video/audio clip, mute speakers and gradually increase noise to prevent sudden loud noise
Bright light	• Avoid flashing lights (especially strobe) unless necessary – provide clear and repeated warnings. • Allow members to opt out or sit in well-lit areas. • Respond to feedback and change lighting when possible – change rooms for future events if necessary • Communicate lighting effects in advance.
Temperature	• Monitor and adjust indoor temperatures if possible. • Advise attendees to dress appropriately. • Provide breaks to warm up or cool down. • Avoid prolonged exposure to extreme conditions. • Provide heaters or fans if needed. • Respond to feedback and change temperature if possible • Move to a different space if it becomes dangerously cold/hot
Food Poisoning	• Store food at correct temperatures. • Check expiry dates and source from reputable suppliers. • Use gloves and follow hygiene practices. • Label allergens and ingredients – keep hold of any labels or packaging for people to check • Request dietary information in advance • Ensure handwashing facilities are available if food is being provided • Disclaimer placed on any homemade food • Any homemade food will be prepared, stored and served in the correct conditions and handles using good food hygiene practices
Allergies (food, materials or animals)	• Collect allergy info in advance via sign-up forms. • Label all food and materials clearly. - keep hold of any labels or packaging for people to check • Avoid use of common allergens where possible. • Make events inclusive by offering allergen-free options • Any emergency will be reported using the Accident or Near Miss form

NORWICH ARTS STUDENTS' UNION

Club and Society Activity Risk Assessment – Example Control Mechanisms

Alcohol	• Encourage responsible drinking – remind people to drink water throughout the night • One society lead remains sober, or if group exceeds 15 people then two society leads should remain sober • Provide non-alcoholic options. • Never pressure anyone to drink. • Monitor for intoxication or risky behaviour. • Promote safer taxi scheme to ensure people get home safe • Encourage travelling to and from night time event in groups • Use anti spiking equipment – can be obtained from SU • Request support from Venue if needed • Any emergency will be reported using the Accident or Near Miss form
Sporting or physical activity	• Conduct warm-ups and cool-downs. • Ensure first aid and hydration are available. • Promote use of appropriate PPE (e.g. pads, helmets). • Adjust intensity for beginners. • Supervise high-risk activities closely. • Request assistance from sports venue in setting up of pitch/court • Check quality and condition of equipment regularly • Any injury will be reported using the Accident or Near Miss form • Society Leads will ensure the chosen sports venue suits the nature of the activity • Participants reminded to be aware of personal spaces – if physical contact is necessary this will be done appropriately and responsibly – anyone undertaking any unnecessary physical contact will be asked to stop
Differing experience levels	• Offer induction/briefing sessions. • Pair experienced members with new ones. • Tailor activities for all abilities (use tiered levels). • Encourage questions and open communication. • Set clear expectations for conduct and safety.
Bullying, harassment and discrimination	• Establish a clear code of conduct. • Designate welfare officers or points of contact. • Promote inclusivity and zero-tolerance policies. • Report any bullying to SU

Club and Society Activity Risk Assessment – Example Control Mechanisms

	• Signpost affected students to student support or SU • Any complaints or reports will be forwarded to SU
Anti-social behaviour	• Communicate expected behaviour clearly. • Involve security or police if needed. • Report to SU and signpost any affected parties to Student Support or SU • Move society to different area of venue/area to avoid escalation of conflict
Health Emergency (eg. asthma attack)	• Collect emergency contact and medical info in advance • Check how to access first aid support within external venue, keep duty managers phone number saved in phone for emergencies • Know how to access emergency services quickly. • Clearly mark first aid kit and its location. • Any emergency will be reported using the Accident or Near Miss form
Chemical Substances	• Always read the back of any products you are using to ensure that it is safe. If it is not safe, these products will not be used. • To ensure that skin is not affected, gloves, masks and other relevant protective wear should be worn. • Ensure that a safety briefing is given at the beginning of the event so that people use the equipment correctly and safely, making sure you let people know that the products are not safe to eat.
Animal Handling	• Ensure that everybody involves washes their hands after touching animals. • If applicable, provide footwear covers to avoid contamination in clean areas. • Ensure you provide signage informing people not to touch their mouth and eyes directly after petting animals. • Provide antibacterial gel and or wipes. • If possible, have an animal handler on site to manage all of the animals. • If any of the animals bite, make sure you go to the doctors to get the bite checked over.
Overcrowding	• Know venue capacity and do not exceed this – use ticket mechanisms to control this • Use a one in and one out policy once capacity is reached • Decide who in your team is in charge of crowd control – act as door stewards
Controversial or Upsetting content	• Include trigger/content warnings in marketing materials and at the start of an event • Remind attendees they can step out if they need to • Follow necessary external speaker procedure

Club and Society Activity Risk Assessment – Example Control Mechanisms

	• Publicis support services
Members of the Public	• Use wristbands. Badges or something else to help identify members of your society • In outdoor spaces, keep an eye out on surroundings and if there are any animals or children around • Keep physical activity such as sports games far from densely populated areas or roads and walkways