



RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK UNIVERSITY RISK REGISTER TEMPLATE – HOW TO GUIDE

1. SUMMARY

This document is intended as a basic step-by-step user-guide providing instruction on how to use the University’s standard risk register template. The same template should be used at institutional level, by Schools, Directorates and on projects. A blank template [is available](#) for use via the Directorate of Planning website.

2. KEY POINTS ON OPENING THE TEMPLATE

On opening the template you will be met with three tabs:

1. Risk Summary Table
2. Scoring Matrix
3. Financial Sustainability – this is a mock risk worksheet included for illustrative purposes.

This document provides a summary and guidance for each tab in turn.

3. FIRST TAB - RISK SUMMARY TABLE

1. The Risk Summary Table is used to illustrate at a glance how many risks are included against each Risk Area, with a rating of Green, Yellow, Amber or Red.

2. The risk template is pre-populated with a mock risk which shows in the Summary Table as “Financial Sustainability”. Please note that the Summary Table populates automatically when entering text or data into corresponding fields within the relevant risk worksheet; do not try to populate this table manually.
3. If you need to create a new risk worksheet, click “Add new risk”, as circled in red below (**Figure 1**); do not add a new tab using the conventional method, i.e. clicking the plus (+) sign in the bottom bar next to the furthest right tab
4. When you add a new risk, a new tab will appear titled Risk 2 and a new line will appear in the Risk Summary Table. This tab is a risk worksheet. You can create as many of these as you wish, though it is not envisaged that many would ever be required.
5. To rename the worksheet, right click the tab heading in the bottom bar and enter text accordingly. As above the first risk worksheet is titled “Financial Sustainability” for illustrative purposes.

Figure 1: Risk Register Summary Table

		Count of Risks			
		Green	Yellow	Amber	Red
	Add new risk				
	Risk Areas				
1	Financial Sustainability	0	0	0	0
2		0	0	0	0
	Total	0	0	0	0

4. SECOND TAB - RISK SCORING MATRIX

Risks are scored using a standard scoring matrix, with possible scores ranging from 1 to 4 under both likelihood and impact; meaning the likelihood of a risk unfolding, and its impact in the event that it does. This means the maximum score any risk can be allocated is 16 (4x4). The matrix provides a visual representation of the risk score by applying RAG ratings to match the severity of risk posed, as follows: Green = Low, Yellow = Moderate, Amber = High, and Red = Critical. The matrix also provides basic scoring criteria to help inform judgement and decision making. A copy of the matrix is included below under **Figure 2**.

Users should always ensure that risk scores are proportionate relative to context. For example, on a capital project with a budget of £30million, a projected cost overrun of £50K, equating to 0.16% of the total budget, would not be rated as Critical given the wider budgetary context; this would be a very minor overspend. However, on a capital project with a £100K budget, a £50K overspend would equate to 50% of the total budget, and therefore in that context, the risk *would* be rated as Critical; this would be a major overspend.

Figure 2: Risk Scoring Matrix

		Impact			
		Low (1)	Moderate (2)	High (3)	Critical (4)
L i k e l i h o o d	Highly Likely (4)	4	8	12	16
	Likely (3)	3	6	9	12
	Feasible (2)	2	4	6	8
	Unlikely (1)	1	2	3	4

5. THIRD TAB – RISK WORKSHEET

A blank risk worksheet is pre-populated as below.

Figure 3: Risk Action Plan

No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)	Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place / in progress / due to start)	Completion Due Date	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)	Risk Movement
							● GREEN 0							● GREEN 0	Up
							● GREEN 0							● GREEN 0	Down
							● GREEN 0							● GREEN 0	No Change
							● GREEN 0							● GREEN 0	
							● GREEN 0							● GREEN 0	
							● GREEN 0							● GREEN 0	
							● GREEN 0							● GREEN 0	
							● GREEN 0							● GREEN 0	
							● GREEN 0							● GREEN 0	

To populate the worksheet please follow the following steps.

- I. **Begin by entering the title of the Risk Area** in the field to the right of “Strategic Risk Area” at the top. In this example it is populated as “Financial Sustainability”. When populating this field, the text entered will automatically appear under the “Risk Area” heading in the Risk Summary Table on the first tab.
- II. **Every risk should be numbered** for ease of reference populating the first filed – ‘No.’ in the table; in this case the number used is 1.1.
- III. Under the **Risk** field, a summary of the risk should then be entered; i.e. what *could* happen.
- IV. In the subsequent fields the **Risk Owner and Risk Manager** should be entered. The Risk Owner is the person accountable for the risk; the Risk Manager is responsible its effective management.
- V. Under **Consequences**, a list of how the risk could affect the University (or functional unit or project, as appropriate) should be given. To list the potential consequences hold “alt” on the keyboard and click “return” to start a new line without switching cells.
- VI. In the next two fields under **Likelihood and Impact**, the combined entries generate the **Unmitigated Risk Score** (gross), which represents the level of risk faced prior to undertaking any mitigating actions. **As above the values entered can range from 1 to 4, based the scoring matrix included in the second tab.**

- VII. The **Unmitigated Risk Score** is often referred to as an inherent or gross risk score. This refers to the level of risk an activity would pose if no controls or mitigating actions were put in place. **This score will appear automatically following the Likelihood and Impact entries, and this will be RAG rated as above:** Green = Low, Yellow = Moderate, Amber = High, and Red = Critical.
- VIII. Under **Response**, there are four options, with one to be selected via a drop-down menu: **Avoid, Treat, Tolerate, Transfer**. In most cases the response will be to Treat the risk by undertaking mitigating actions. However in some cases the response may be to Avoid the risk which would normally mean abandoning the activity in question because the associated risks are too high. The option to Tolerate would apply when the level of risk is acceptable but there are limited options available to treat or mitigate. If Transferring risk, this would normally apply when taking out an insurance policy or when agreeing certain contract types; for example, a fixed price contract on a project would transfer the risk of incurring additional costs to a contractor in the event of budget overrun.
- IX. **Under Mitigations**, enter a list of specific, high-level actions either planned or ongoing to mitigate and control the risk. All mitigating actions should be designed to strengthen the controls already in place and to bring the Unmitigated Risk Score down. Users should also include a timeline for completing the action, i.e. "Due for completion <insert date>". As above, to start a new line for a new mitigation in the cell, hold down 'alt' in the keyboard and press return.
- X. In the **Status** column, the status of the mitigating action should be given. This should reflect progress made in completing the mitigating action listed in the adjacent cell prior. Users should be specific when providing the status, i.e. "In place", "In progress", "Due to start" or an alternative. Completed actions should be displayed for one reporting round and then removed. The **completion due date** should also be given in the subsequent column.
- XI. In the next two fields under **Likelihood and Impact**, entries here generate the **Mitigated Risk Score** (net), which represents the level of risk faced *after* taking account of all listed mitigating actions. As a consequence, the Mitigated Risk Score will *normally* be lower the Unmitigated Risk Score, albeit not always; it may be that the mitigating actions in place are seen as preventing the level of risk from increasing, while doing little to reduce it. Finally, it should be noted that on populating these fields, the number of risks rated Green, Yellow, Amber or Red within the worksheet will then be calculated and shown in the Risk Summary Table on the first tab, thereby enabling a quick summary view of the risk profile within that Risk Area.
- XII. Under **Risk Movement** in the final column, please select either "Up", "Down" or "No change" to indicate which way the risk score has moved since the last review.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on the University's Risk Management arrangements, please refer to the University's Risk Management Framework, available via the Directorate of Planning website here. For any direct queries relating to this guide or other issues linked to Risk Management, please contact Iain Grant in the Directorate of Planning (i.grant@abdn.ac.uk) in the first instance.