

GETTING THINGS DONE

Managing risk and reputation



Considering wider context and managing risk

Reputation is hard to earn... and easy to lose. This is true of individuals, groups and organisations. You have an obligation to your colleagues, your clients and your organisation to protect their reputations and their personal, professional and financial data.

Managing risk is a core element of management responsibilities. If managers fail to spot or mitigate a risk, this may have negative consequences in terms of resources, reputation, performance or delivery. Being over-cautious or overestimating risk can also have negative consequences and lead to missed opportunities. Managers therefore need to be mindful of identifying, analysing and mitigating risk as part of their planning and decision-making. This will encompass a wide range of risks related to tasks, people and process. For example, allocating key responsibilities and related training to a single staff member could lead to significant disruption in the case of their absence; instigating new, improved approaches to processes could lead to drops in use and consistency, etc.

Working for a large, complex organisation requires managers to consider risk and impact beyond their immediate team. When implementing a decision or change, what impact may this have on the wider system? For example, redesigning your website to make it more accessible might break links from other teams, and in the same way, revising your processes may impact other parts of the process further down the line, e.g. improving the pace of replies to enquiries might create a backlog somewhere else. Divisions, departments, faculties and other units are expected to manage risk in a manner appropriate to each unit. You can find out more about the University's approach to risk management here: [Risk management | Compliance \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/risk-management)

Here is one approach to risk management

● Step 1: Identify risks

Think about immediate context – what are the risks to your team, their work and your stakeholders? What risks might there be to the wider system in which you work? Risks can be related to health, safety and wellbeing, to quality or timeliness of delivering work, to wider impacts on the division or University, or to team or University reputation. You will need to consider what risks you may have missed – to do this, consider who may have the information you need.

● Step 2: Analyse risks

For all of the risks you identify, you will be considering how high the impact and how likely the risk, as illustrated below.

			Impact			
			0 Acceptable	1 Tolerable	2 Unacceptable	3 Intolerable
			Little or No Effect	Effects are Felt but Not Critical	Serious Impact to Course of Action and Outcome	Could Result in Disasters
Likelihood	Improbable	Risk Unlikely to Occur				
	Possible	Risk Will Likely Occur				
	Probable	Risk Will Occur				

● Step 3: Mitigate risks and monitor

Consider all the reasonable steps you can take to reduce the likelihood and impact of the identified risks. Think about who can help with this step. Design, implement and monitor the resulting actions. (For major risks, this will be through a formal risk register.)

Reflection:

What is your default approach to risk on the spectrum?

Do you tend to plough ahead or tend to spend a lot of time considering first?

Let's go for it!  **Let's reflect some more...**

ACTIVITY 

How well does your default approach work for your current setting? What benefits might a different approach bring? Do you have opportunities to take more risks? Or to be more cautious in your approach?

What do you see as the greatest risks to the successful delivery of your current plans? How well have you analysed and mitigated these risks? What else could you do? Who could help?

How well have you considered the wider context (e.g. indirect stakeholders) in your planning and risk management? What else could you do? Who could help?



Complete the Reflection sheet