

General Risk Assessment (#64988349): The Equator Project - funded by a DLA Network

40-1312 Geography Environment & Planning • Sheffield Hallam University, and Remote/Online

Completed by Natasha Dowey on 9 Jul 2025.

6 - Low	5 - Low	6 - Low	6 - Low	6 - Low	6 - Low	4 - Low
Overall Review due 9 Jul 2026	Fire p. 1	Slips, Trips and Falls p. 4	Stress p. 4	Vehicles / Transport p. 5	Violence and Aggression p. 6	Online working at desk p. 7

Activity / Task Being Undertaken

5 day Research School at Sheffield Hallam University
Online Mentoring Network
Online steering committee and funder network meetings

How will this risk assessment be communicated to those affected by its activities?

- Written instruction
- Team brief
- Email

Fire

5 - Low

Who might be harmed?

- Staff
- Students
- Public / Visitors

How could they be harmed?

While hosting the Research School at Sheffield Hallam, a fire could break out on campus.

What are you already doing?

- Students, staff and stakeholders are provided with relevant and comprehensible information, instructions, and training as appropriate, to ensure they are familiar with the emergency arrangements and those with specified fire safety roles are competent to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- Fire doors are kept closed at all times (unless they are doors which automatically close when the alarm is sounded).
- Corridors, stairways, landings and escape routes are kept clear at all times of anything that is likely to cause a fire or to impede evacuation in an emergency.
- Refuges for use by wheelchair users must never be used to store materials, equipment or furniture.
- All firefighting equipment is kept free from obstruction and be readily available for use in an emergency.

- Fire alarm call points must be kept free from obstruction and not be covered or obscured from view.
- Smoke and fire detectors not be impeded in their operation.
- Electrical sockets not overloaded.
- Equipment checked prior to use for faults.
- All electrical faults reported to designated person.
- Defective electrical equipment shall be clearly identified, labelled as out of use and stored separately to prevent accidental use.

Any additional controls required?

- Housekeeping messages to guests

Please provide details of all controls

Participants of the Research School will receive a housekeeping announcement at the start of each day informing them of any planned fire drills and reminding them of fire exits

Additional risks for special groups?

- Disabled persons

What are the additional risks?

Disabled participants may be less physically able to evacuate building

What are you already doing?

Following SHU procedures for fire safety and evacuation:

Staff and students with limited mobility

Some staff or students may not be able to use all emergency exits to evacuate safely. Lifts should never be used as there is a real danger that the lift could stop on a floor where there is a fire or the power could shut down. Where there is no direct flat route to the outside, safe refuges are available for use in the event of an emergency evacuation. They provide a fire resistant space where people can wait safely until trained help can arrive. In newer buildings these will be purpose designed, while in other buildings these will be a space like a staircase landing or lift lobby. Each refuge has an intercom for two-way communication with Security Control.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, anyone unable to use the stairs or standard emergency exit, should make their way to the nearest refuge and let Security Control know that they are there. There are instructions on how to contact Control Room and as each refuge has a unique number, they will know your exact location.

In most cases, the fire alarm will be a false alarm or a test, so any person using a refuge will be asked to stay there until the alarm is silenced. In the event of a real emergency, Security Control or the Fire Service will evacuate the person in the refuge as a priority.

If you accompany someone to a refuge, confirm that Security Control have been contacted and then leave by the emergency exit and make your way to the assembly point. At the assembly point, let the Fire Marshals, Security or the Health and Safety Service know that someone is in a refuge. If you stay in the refuge with them, you may also need to be evacuated, so it is safer for everyone to make your way outside as soon as possible.

It is important that all staff are aware of the locations of emergency refuges and how to use them. Anyone can have short term problems with mobility due to illness or injury or might need to assist

someone who has.

Staff and students who are Deaf or hard of hearing

Most alarms in the University use sound to communicate that there is an emergency and a need to evacuate. There are some visual alarms but these aren't universal.

'Deaf Alerter' pagers are available to use in University buildings. When the fire alarm is activated, they vibrate and display the name of the building where the alarm is sounding. They are available for students from Disabled Student Support and for staff and visitors from Security Control at City Campus.

If Deaf staff are working in isolated areas or on their own, measures need to be put in place to ensure they are physically alerted if the fire alarm sounds. This should form part of the Lone Working Risk Assessment.

Staff and students who are Blind or partially sighted

Blind or partially sighted staff and students are advised to locate evacuation routes and assembly points in their early days at the University. In the case of staff, locations will vary, so arrangements for their safe evacuation should be agreed with their line manager on an individual basis.

Any additional controls required?

- Clear communication with all participants, particularly those who are unfamiliar with SHU buildings

	Remote	Occasional	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain
Minor	1	2	3	4	5
Moderate	2	4	6	8	10
Serious	3	6	9	12	15
Major	4	8	12	16	20
Critical/Fatal	5	10	15	20	25

Slips, Trips and Falls

6 - Low

Who might be harmed?

- Staff
- Students
- Public / Visitors

How could they be harmed?

Participants or facilitators of the research school could trip or fall during the week long conference, resulting in injury

What are you already doing?

- Areas are identified where levels change, e.g. slopes, ramps, steps/stairs, unexpected holes, bumps etc.
- No trailing cables/hoses.
- Spills dealt with immediately.
- Equipment is stored tidily.
- Floors and access routes are kept free from obstruction.

Please provide details of all controls

During research school, areas will be kept free of any obstructions, and if any spills happen during breaks they will be dealt with immediately

Additional risks for special groups?

- Expectant or New Nursing Mothers

What are the additional risks?

Slips or trips for pregnant women could be more serious

What are you already doing?

Clear housekeeping messages at start of research school

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Stress

6 - Low

Who might be harmed?

- Staff
- Students
- Public / Visitors

How could they be harmed?

The Research School and Mentoring Network seek to improve race equity in environmental research. The topic of race equity and prejudice is often raised during discussions, predominantly by participants and predominantly with the aim of sharing experiences, reflecting upon the discipline, and supporting the network. However, these conversations can be triggering and emotionally stressful.

Stress (cont.)

6 - Low

What are you already doing?

- Ensuring inclusive and safe environment

Please provide details of all controls

Ensuring a staff and inclusive environment, through:

Research School: ensuring facilitators with shared lived experiences and/or experience of working in EEDI, recognition and open conversation about stress and triggers, clear offers for supportive one-to-ones where needed, provision of quiet break out spaces. Also asking all present to follow a code of conduct that helps to create a supportive space.

Mentoring Network: ensuring mentors have shared lived experiences and/or understanding and appreciation of the EEDI challenges within environmental research. Sharing literature with mentors to prepare them for these conversations. Holding on-boarding sessions with both mentors and mentees to prepare them for mentor discussions. Asking mentors and mentees to sign a code of conduct agreement.

Additional risks for special groups?

- Disabled persons

What are the additional risks?

Disabled people attending the conference have intersectional considerations that may make stresses or triggers more acute.

What are you already doing?

Project leads are aware of, and sensitive to these risks, have undergone all recommended institutional training, and are empathetic and looking out for the mental wellbeing of all participants- particularly those who may have intersectional considerations

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Vehicles / Transport

6 - Low

Who might be harmed?

- Staff
- Students
- Public / Visitors

How could they be harmed?

Travelling to or from the research school, or to or from a mentoring network in person meeting

What are you already doing?

- Public transport recommended

Please provide details of all controls

Recommending public transport to travel to research school and in person mentor meeting

Vehicles / Transport (cont.)

6 - Low

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Violence and Aggression

6 - Low

Who might be harmed?

- Staff
- Students
- Public / Visitors

How could they be harmed?

The Equator Project involves interventions ring-fenced for ethnic minority participants. There is a risk that those participants could experience racist violence or aggression while staying in Sheffield for the research school

What are you already doing?

- System in place for reporting and recording incidents.
- Staff aware of how to handle difficult situations and avoid confrontation.

Please provide details of all controls

We will ensure that all Equator participants are provided with information sheets with contact details of project lead, so that can report any incidents that occur. If on campus, project lead will follow SHU procedures and use report and support. If an incident involving a participant occurs off campus (for example while having breakfast at the hotel), project lead will contact police.

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Who might be harmed?

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How could they be harmed?

The mentoring network involves online mentoring sessions. The Research School involves some desk-based work. Both interventions involve online completion of surveys. Participants could be harmed through poor ergonomic set up, resulting in back pain, or through prolonged screen use, resulting in migraines.

What are you already doing?

Ensuring that online on-boarding sessions do not last more than an hour. Ensuring that mentoring sessions online do not last more than an hour.

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