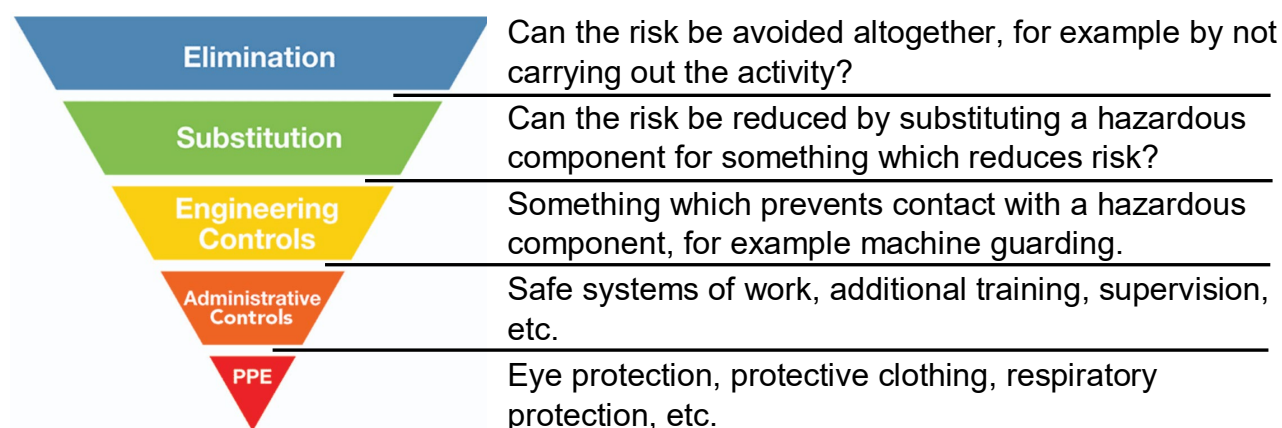


## Further guidance on the risk assessment of fieldwork and business travel including Covid considerations

The risk assessment process is often described as a careful examination of anything in the workplace which could cause harm. This has to be extended to include any work activities which take place outwith University premises, such as fieldwork, off site research, or business travel. Such risk assessments should include consideration of all hazards involved, related to work activities, travel, weather conditions, etc.

The purpose of risk assessments is to put in place measures to control the risk, so that any residual risk is at a level which is acceptable to those individuals involved, or to those who are supervising the activity.

When considering which controls to use assessors should follow the hierarchy of controls, which should be adopted, where possible, in the order shown below:



Elimination of the risk is always the preferred option, with personal protective equipment the least preferred, but it is accepted that elimination of risk cannot always be achieved. The options in the hierarchy should be implemented to leave a level of residual risk which is acceptable to those involved.

When carrying out a risk assessment it makes sense to consider all the potential hazards which could reasonably be foreseen during the activity, indicate what controls are appropriate and when they should be implemented, and record these so that the thought process which the assessor went through is clear. At the end of the process the assessor can use the findings of the risk assessment to formulate a safe system of work, which is basically a set of instructions indicating the safe way to carry out the task. This could take the form of an instruction sheet which is given to students prior to a field trip.

To illustrate this with an example, consider a proposed field trip to take a group of twelve students from the University of Edinburgh on a trip to Glasgow to look at the work of a particular architect. A risk assessment of this type of trip might include hazards such as travel, weather, risk of Covid infection, slips and trips, traffic, minor injury, existing medical conditions, individuals going missing from group, significant incidents, welfare facilities, etc. (see:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/guidance/workplaces-general/return-to-the-university-estate> for example risk assessment.

In this example hierarchy is applied to control one of these hazards, travel, with particular reference to the risk of Covid infection:

Hierarchy	Suggested control
Eliminate	Delivery on line, using photographs, video, and other materials, perhaps from a previous visit, or gathered by a tutor.
Substitution	Reduce risk by (for example) moving trip to Edinburgh, so that it becomes a walking trip. If travel is essential, consider travelling on public transport avoiding busy periods to reduce contact with others, or if hiring transport, by hiring a larger vehicle to allow greater physical distance between participants. Face coverings must currently be worn on public transport, and should be worn on other forms of transport.
Engineering Controls	Increase ventilation in cars/pubic transport, by simply opening windows.
Administrative Controls	Ensure all participants are accounted for at all times, and are aware of arrangements, including those required by Covid guidance. Appropriate supervision by staff at all times.
PPE	Suitable face coverings, nitrile gloves available if handling any materials.

The above process should be completed for all significant hazards and reasonably foreseeable risks, and a safe system of work (such as instruction sheet/protocol) formulated, which informs participants how to carry out the activity safely.