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# Risk Management Policy

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<b>Author</b>	<b>HKIST Education Committee</b>
<b>Custodian</b>	<b>Chairperson of HKIST Education Committee</b>
<b>Approved / Endorsed By</b>	<b>HKIST Professional Council</b>
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## 1.0 Objective

This document outlines the structure, process, and outcome measures of risk management adopted by the Hong Kong Institute of Speech Therapists Limited (HKIST). Traditionally, the speech therapy profession was believed to be of relatively risk-free among health services. However, the expanded scope of practice of speech therapy, the heightened concern on infection control and the increased demand of the general public for safe and effective service delivery call for mechanism to address risk management and continuous performance improvement. Risk management is therefore a high priority issue for speech therapists. The risks associated with the practice of speech therapists are classified into four areas of concern:

- i. Safety of service users and the public;
- ii. Professional behaviour, technical competence, and personal safety of the registered speech therapists;
- iii. Impact on the public image and development of the speech therapy profession;
- iv. Responsibility and liability of the HKIST and the registered speech therapists

## 2.0 Scope

This policy provides guidance for all registered speech therapists to manage risks.

## 3.0 The Roles of the HKIST in Risk Management for Speech Therapy Services

- 3.1.1 To establish a risk management system so as to ensure its healthy operation as a regulating body for registered speech therapists;
- 3.1.2 To provide tools and guidelines for registered speech therapists so as to help them minimize risks in their speech therapy practice; and
- 3.1.3 To educate the general public about risk-free speech therapy services.

## 4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 Risk is defined as “the effect of uncertainty on objectives”. Any uncertainties that affect the provision of quality speech therapy service, are called risks.
- 4.2 Risk management is the management of these uncertainties.
- 4.3 Quality speech therapy service can be defined as client-centered, safe, timely, effective, efficient, and equitable.

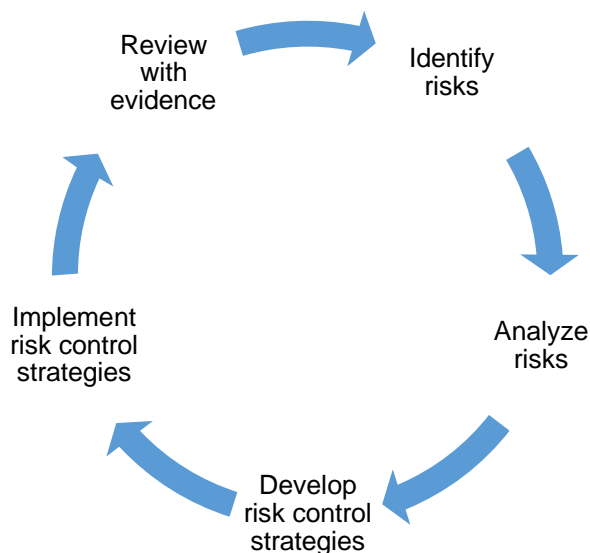
## 5.0 Risk Management Framework

- 5.1 The risk management framework adopts a proactive stance to identify and manage risks related to business, finance, human resources, environment, information management and service provisions of speech therapy practice.

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All staff and client participation are encouraged to engage in risk management planning and implementation.

5.2 The risk management framework consists of the following continuous process:



- i. Identify risks: identifying actual risks and potential risks;
- ii. Analyze risks: analyzing risks by using a Risk Matrix;
- iii. Develop risk control strategies: developing strategies to avoid, manage, and mitigate risks and report incidents to the risk register;
- iv. Implement risk control strategies: communicating strategies to stakeholders and implementing risk management techniques and systems;
- v. Review with evidence: Monitoring the effectiveness of risk control strategies by gathering information and acting upon them.

## 6.0 Risk analysis and prioritization

6.1 Risks identified should be analyzed by appraising the likelihood of occurrence and the potential consequence.

6.2 The Risk Matrix is used as the tool to record and quantify risks identified.

6.3 Prioritization of risks should then be conducted with consideration of the risk rating, criticality, tolerability of the risk, existence and effectiveness of control measures.

## 7.0 Risk Classification and Identification in Speech Therapy Service

7.1 Risks defined by the HKIST are classified into four areas:

- i. Risk pertaining to Speech Therapy profession
- ii. Risk pertaining to the Hong Kong Institute of Speech Therapists Limited
- iii. Risk pertaining to the Register of Registered Speech Therapists

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7.2 Registered speech therapists should notice the common clinical risks in speech therapy service identified across settings and across target populations. For instance, risks in education settings in speech and language intervention of children with impairments (e.g. autistic spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy) may be different from risks in hospital settings in swallowing management of adults with various diseases (e.g. stroke, dementia, respiratory diseases)

7.3 Registered speech therapists should also be aware of the non-clinical risks that are identified for the speech therapy profession.

## 8.0 Risk Register

The risks should be avoided continuously. The Risk Register is used for documenting the major risk management process, including risk identification, analysis, and control, targeting at risks avoidance and mitigation. The following components should be included in the Risk Register:

- i. Description of the risk
- ii. Risk analysis (likelihood, consequence, rating), and prioritization
- iii. Action plan
- iv. Person in-charge of the risk management
- v. Target completion date

8.2 The HKIST keeps an annual record of the Risk Register which will be reviewed on an annual basis. Registered speech therapists should report to the HKIST by submitting the Risk Register Entry Form regarding their risks as appropriate, especially when new risks are identified. The Risk Register Entry Form can be retrieved at from HKIST website (Appendix VI).

8.3 The HKIST Risk Register is accessible in on the HKIST website and should be communicated to all relevant staff in speech therapy clinics.

## 9.0 Handbook of Risk Management Procedures

Risk management is the responsibility of every speech therapist regardless of work setting. A handbook of risk management procedures should be available in every work setting for all speech therapists, staff, and student clinicians. The handbook should cover the following:

- i. Safety and security precautions;
- ii. Incidents and accidents prevention strategies;
- iii. Report mechanism to the HKIST Risk Register;
- iv. Infection control; and
- v. Education of registered speech therapists and service users.

9.2 Annual review of this handbook of quality and risk management procedures should be conducted and documented. Procedures should be revised should such need arises.

## 10.0 Quality improvement framework

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Upon identification and analysis of risks, the HKIST carries out quality improvement programs as risk control measures to mitigate risks. A member of the Professional Council will be designated to take charge of the program. The period of risk management program, person in-charge, parties involved, date of record, identification of risk, plan of the solution, implementation of the solutions, monitoring of the solutions and evaluation of the solutions should be documented clearly in the risk management summary (Appendix II).

10.2 Throughout the course of the program, minutes of meetings which review and show quality improvement process in action and evidence of demonstrable improvement should be documented.

10.3 Members of the Professional Council audit of the quality improvement programs triennially.

## **11.0 The Roles of Different Parties in Risk Management**

### **11.1 Professional Council**

11.1.1 The Professional Council of the HKIST is responsible for managing risks of the administrative operations of the HKIST.

11.1.2 Members of the Professional Council shall continuously monitor and evaluate any potential risks and propose feasible ways to control risks with reference to published evidence.

11.1.3 The Professional Council is also responsible for managing risks related to speech therapy practice and safeguarding service users, registered speech therapists and the general public.

11.1.4 The Professional Council shall update the Risk Register every year.

11.1.5 Representatives of the Professional Council shall audit the accuracy and currency of the Risk Register, as well as the continuous quality improvement programmes every three years.

### **11.2 Education Committee**

11.2.1 The Education Committee under the Professional Council is the executive body which evaluates any risks related to speech therapy practice and report to the Professional Council.

11.2.2 Members of the Education Committee shall monitor and evaluate any potential risks and propose feasible ways to control the risks with reference to published evidence.

11.2.3 The Education Committee is also responsible for monitoring any further incidence of the identified risks and report to the Professional Council, including any need to raise the risk alert to registered speech therapists and other stakeholders.

11.2.4 The Education Committee shall provide input to the Professional Council for the annual update of Risk Register.

11.2.5 The Education Committee is also responsible for communicating with stakeholders in the speech therapy services, e.g. registered speech therapists, employers, and the general public about any risks that may affect public health (e.g. announcement of inappropriate practices).

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### **11.3 Registered speech therapists of the HKIST**

- 11.3.1 The HKIST shall keep an annual record of the Risk Register. The Risk Register shall be made accessible by all registered speech therapists and relevant staff in speech therapy settings.
- 11.3.2 Registered speech therapists shall report any suspected risks to the Education Committee or Professional Council to facilitate the identification and management processes.
- 11.3.3 Registered speech therapists are also responsible for following the proposed risk control strategies to ensure safe and high quality practices. They are encouraged to manage risks in speech therapy practices using the risk management tools provided by the HKIST.

## **12.0 Implementation of Risk Management Process in the HKIST**

- 12.1 The Professional Council and Education Committee shall complete risk analysis and propose relevant measures to reduce corresponding risks. Risks pertaining to the operations of the HKIST shall be analysed by the Professional Council, while risks pertaining to educational psychology practice shall be processed by the Education Committee. The process shall be completed within 6 months.
- 12.2 The Education Committee shall submit the updated Risk Register related to speech therapy practice to the Professional Council for endorsement. The endorsed Risk Register shall be disseminated to registered speech therapists .
- 12.3 Risk related to the operations of the HKIST will be documented in the minutes of the Professional Council meetings. Follow-up actions shall be assigned to relevant staff and Committees whenever appropriate.
- 12.4 The Professional Council and Education Committee shall review and follow up with the required actions listed on the Risk Register based on the timeline stipulated.
- 12.5 Re-assessment of risks and review of the Risk Register shall be conducted by the Professional Council and Education Committee annually.
- 12.6 The Professional Council and Education Committee shall also be vigilant about potential risks and call for an update of the Risk Register and follow-up actions if immediate actions are deemed necessary.
- 12.7 The Education Committee shall liaise with relevant professional parties for sourcing relevant continuing education opportunities on risk

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management for registrants when it deems necessary.

### **13.0 References**

- 13.1 Developing and Populating a Risk Register Best Practice Guidance. Health Service Executive 2009.
- 13.2 Organization Wide Risk Management, Hospital Authority Head Office.





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## Appendix II

### Risk Management Summary for \_\_\_\_\_

Period of risk management program:

Person in-charge:

Parties involved:

Date of record:

1. Part A: Identification of Risk
2. Part B: Planning the solution (Plan)
3. Implementing the solutions (Do)
4. Monitoring the solutions (Check)
5. Evaluating the solutions (Act)