Instruction on Work at Height

- Can work at height be avoided?
- Can the work be accessed by stairs and carried out from a safe place where there is no potential risk of falling persons or falling objects?

If the answer to both is **No** ~ then you need to consider:

The Place of work; Access to the place of work; Fall Protection requirements.

Suitable equipment is necessary for work at height.
The place of work and the access to it will normally need fall protection: *see Note 1.*
Work equipment which prevents falls should be used wherever practicable and **collective measures** should be given priority over personal measures. *(See table below for guidance)*
The place of work and fall protection measures must be checked on each occasion before the place is used.

Access to and the Place of Work

Specifically consider

- Fragile surfaces: *see Note 2*
- Uneven / unstable ground for access equipment
- Persons below your work area
- **Environmental Conditions**
  - Conditions outdoors and indoors will affect people working at height.
  - Weather, wind, temperature.
  - Consider the effect on fall protection equipment.
  - Lighting and visibility
  - Noise levels ~ ability to communicate
- **Movement of Equipment & Materials**
  - Risks: equipment or materials may fall from height or may affect the balance of workers or the stability of equipment.
  - Equipment and materials should be moved to and from the place of work in ways that avoid these risks.
  - Where there remains a risk of falling materials, set up exclusion zones such as fencing.
  - Materials, tools or debris must never be thrown down from height.

Fall Protection Equipment *(see Note 1)*		
	Collective	**Personal**
Work equipment which prevents a fall.	Guard rails, barriers at edges and openings, scaffolding, cherry pickers, scissor lifts, podium steps.	Fall restraint systems stop you falling if you slip, trip or are knocked over.
Work equipment which minimises the consequences of a fall.	Airbags, safety nets.	Fall arrest systems limit the distance of a fall and bring you safely to a stop.
Work equipment that does not prevent nor mitigate a fall.	Ladders, stepladders, kick stools. (Only acceptable for limited situations: see Ladders Guide; Ladders / Steps Tips; Ladders Inspection guide; Steps inspection guide.)	

Rescue Arrangements

- You must have rescue plans if people are using fall arrest equipment or powered access equipment.
- Trained people with appropriate equipment must be available to carry out the rescue: relying on the emergency services is not sufficient.

People Working at Height

Staff who are required to work at height

- should be referred to Occ Health to check they are fit to work at height.
- should be trained, so they can:
  - safely use fall protection equipment;
  - look after fall protection equipment;
  - work safely at height;
  - use rescue procedures.

Contractors: see "Selecting competent contractors for work at height".

Supervisors should

- understand statutory and University requirements
- understand the range of pall protection equipment
- be able to assess the risk and identify a safe sytem of work to protect those working at height and the public
- be able to assess the level of competence of staff or contractors and apply the appropriate level of supervision

Note 1:
Personal fall restraint or fall arrest equipment must be properly designed and used appropriately i.e.:

- they have sufficiently strong and tested anchor points;
- users of fall restraint cannot reach any edge from which they can fall; and
- fall arrest equipment will deploy such that the distance the person falls and consequence of the fall are minimised.

See specific guidance on:

- selecting equipment for work at height
- selecting, using and maintaining personal fall protection equipment
- erecting, using, moving and inspecting tower scaffolds
- inspection requirements guidance
- harness & accessories inspection record
- preventing falls from boom-type mobile elevating work platforms.

Note 2
A fragile surface is one which would be liable to break if a person worked on it or fell onto it. Common examples include fibre and asbestos cement roof sheets and many skylights.

- **Avoid** the need to work on or near or pass across them by, eg repairing a skylight from underneath using a tower scaffold or from above using a cherry picker;
- **Prevent** a fall by using fixed walkways with guard rails to get across a fragile roof or use suitable working platforms with guard rails during work on or near a fragile surface;
- **Identify** with warning signs