



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction:

The University of British Columbia Biosafety Committee is charged by the Associate Vice President, Research and International, on behalf of the University, to ensure all activities within the University involving biological agents are conducted in a safe manner and in conformity with generally accepted standards. Within the terms of the Committee biological agents include: genetically modified organisms that may be hazardous to humans or the environment, biological products, microorganisms, human/animal tissues, cells, blood and bodily fluids. The term 'infectious' includes biological toxins, viruses, bacteria, fungi, parasites and other organisms/genetic systems that, by virtue of their replicative properties, are potentially harmful to humans, animals and the environment.

The University affirms that the primary responsibility for the safety of staff, students, and the public lies with the Principal Investigator using or authorizing the use of such agents. In addition, the University acknowledges it is accountable for providing a policy and procedural framework designed to ensure that work is being conducted safely and in conformity with the relevant acts and regulations.

All research carried out under the auspices of the University and/or in University facilities must comply with the Human Pathogens and Toxins Act, the Canadian Biosafety Standards, the Canadian Biosafety Guidelines, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Acts and Standards, Federal and Provincial Environmental Acts and Standards for Invasive Species, and WorkSafe BC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. These requirements are regardless of the research funding source.

The UBC Biosafety Committee, in conjunction with the Department of Risk Management Services, will review and approve risk assessments of the biological work in progress or proposed, accredit the facilities on an ongoing basis, assist in the design of appropriate laboratories and training of personnel, and serve as an educational resource to members of the University community. All research involving the biological agents outlined above require approved risk assessments, or Biosafety Permits, for that work to occur under the UBC Human Pathogens and Toxins license.

Terms of Reference

- **Mandate**

The UBC Biosafety Committee serves as an expert committee that can provide the University with information, informed opinion, and advice in matters that promote biological safety for UBC faculty, staff, students, visitors and the community. The purpose of the Committee is to help people solve biosafety problems and to assist

researchers with their work. It also reviews and approves research occurring under the UBC Human Pathogens and Toxins Act License.

- **Responsibilities**

- Recommending policies, guidelines and procedures that promote the practice of biological safety and security in the handling of microorganisms, their products, their vectors, and potentially contaminated materials to individual researchers, as well as the University.
- Reviewing all UBC biosafety risk assessments to ensure that the practice and the facilities described are suitable to ensure the biological safety of all participants associated with the proposed research, and are consistent with regulations, standards, and approved policies and guidelines.
- The investigator has the right to appeal if the final decision of the Biosafety Committee is to reject a protocol. The request for appeal is to be made to the Associate Vice-President, Research and International of the University of British Columbia.
- May withdraw the approved permit related to any work that is considered to pose an undue biosafety risk and to require the immediate cessation of that work.
- Providing expert opinion, guidance and support for the Department of Risk Management Services in its endeavours to promote through education, inspection, and certification, the biological safety and security of faculty, staff, students, visitors and the community.
- Collecting information through the investigation of issues that directly relate to biological safety and security.
- Providing a link with other experts in biosafety in the city, province, country and the international community in order to ensure that faculty, staff, and students have the benefit of the most current knowledge and opinion on matters integral to biological safety and security.
- Biosafety cannot be considered in isolation of other health and safety issues in research and teaching. The Chair shall liaise with other advisory committees as necessary, such as Environmental Protection Advisory Committee, University Health and Safety Committee, Chemical Safety Committee, Radiation Safety Committee, Clinical Research Ethics Boards, and the Animal Care Committee.

- **Membership and Administration of the Committee**

All positions (excluding ex officio) on the committee are held for a term of 3 years and may be renewed for an additional term, to a total of six (6) years.

The Committee Chair will be appointed by the Associate Vice President, Research and International for two years and may be appointed for an additional two terms to a total of six (6) years.

Membership of the Committee shall include but not be limited to:

- Chair
- A minimum of six faculty members representing:
 - Expertise in the areas of Medicine

- Expertise in the areas of Science
 - Expertise in the areas of Biotechnology
 - Expertise in the areas of Medical Microbiology or Infectious Diseases
- A representative of each Hospital Affiliated Research Institute
- A representative from UBC Okanagan Campus
- Other applicable disciplines as needed
- Representative(s) of other applicable disciplines
- Ex Officio Members:
 - University Veterinarian, Animal Care Services
 - Director, Occupational Health and Research Safety
 - Director, Research Services
 - UBC Biosafety Advisor (Officer)
 - Administrative Manager, Biosafety Committee

- **Reporting Structure**

The Biosafety Committee reports to the Associate Vice President, Research and International

- **Meetings**

The Biosafety Committee will meet no fewer than two (2) times each calendar year.

The quorum for Biosafety Committee meetings is 50 % of the members plus one.

Minutes of all committee meetings, once approved by the committee and signed by the Chair are submitted to the Associate Vice President, Research and International

- **Sub-Committees**

The Biosafety Committee may form one or more subcommittees to conduct any part of its business, provided that the decisions and actions of a subcommittee are subject to ratification by the Biosafety Committee at a meeting.