

UNIVERSITY BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

As per *Biosafety Policy* ([VPSS-52](#))

Last updated: May 29, 2018

1. Introduction

As prescribed in the *Biosafety Policy* ([VPSS-52](#)), the University Biosafety Committee (UBSC) is an advisory committee, which operates within the strict regulations that have been developed in the form of legislation and institutional policies to protect faculty, staff, students, contractors, visitors, volunteer's research subjects and the general public from exposure to Biological Materials.

UBSC provides advice to the University on matters pertaining to the use of Biological Materials. The Committee advises and guides Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) in developing policies, procedures manuals and guidelines that support the academic and research mission of the University. These policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines are established to protect the University community and the environment from exposure to Biological Materials.

The UBSC assists the Biosafety Officer (BSO) with verifying that all Controlled Activities with Biological Materials at the University are conducted in accordance with applicable legislation, internal procedures and recognized codes and standards of practice.

The UBSC supports the BSO with risk assessments, biosafety protocol reviews and approvals, disputes about biosafety matters, or other biosafety or biosecurity concerns.

The UBSC adopted these Terms of Reference to guide its operations.

2. Reporting

The UBSC reports to the Vice-President, Services and Sustainability.

3. Membership

3.1. Members

The Committee is composed of seven (7) members with expertise or experience pertaining to the use of Biological Materials or with academic (teaching) or research activities involving the use of Biological Materials.

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The Committee will ideally include a representative sample of research interests, of Biological Materials use, and, when possible, of appropriate faculty or department representation.

The Committee should include:

- At least four (4) members representing departments or centres/institutes where work involving Biological Material is classified at Containment Level 2
- At least four (4) Biohazards Permit Holders
- At least three (3) members representing the Faculty of Arts and Science
- At least one (1) member representing the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science
- At least three (3) faculty members
- At least three (3) members of the technical staff

All members shall be appointed by the Vice-President, Services and Sustainability upon the recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty they represent or the Director of EHS.

All members are voting members.

3.1.1. Office of Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies

The Committee should include one representative from the Office of Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, recommended by the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies.

3.2. Ex-Officio Members

The Director, Environmental Health and Safety is a voting *Ex-Officio* member of the Committee and the Biosafety Officer (BSO) is a non-voting *Ex-Officio* member of the Committee.

3.3. Substitutions

Substitutions for absent appointed Members are not permitted.

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3.4. Resignation

All resignations shall be made in writing to the Chair(s) with a copy to the Secretary and the Vice-President, Services and Sustainability.

3.5. Attendance

When any member has missed three consecutive regular meetings, the Chair of the Committee will notify their faculty of the member's absence.

3.6. Vacancies

Vacancies should be filled within thirty (30) days. Replacement in mid-term will be for the remainder of the term.

3.7. Guests

Additional persons may be invited to attend meetings with the approval of the Chair(s). Speaking privileges may be granted to non-members at the Committee's discretion. Guests do not have voting privileges and do not count towards the determination of quorum.

3.8. Resources

Environmental Health and Safety will be available as a resource to the Committee. A medical advisor and/or occupational health physician will be available as a resource to the Committee, as required.

4. Terms of Office

- Members are appointed to the Committee for a two (2) year term.
- Terms start on September 1 and run until August 31.
- Terms are renewable.
- If a Member is unable to complete the term, another member will be appointed.

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5. Quorum and Voting

5.1. Quorum

Quorum shall be one half the currently filled voting positions plus one (1).

A meeting may proceed without a quorum (to address current or upcoming business) but voting on resolutions will be prohibited.

5.2. Voting

- Decisions of the UBSC are made by a majority vote of the members present and entitled to vote, except in cases of changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference (see Section 12).
- A vote of the majority of a minimum quorum, as defined above, is required.
- In the event of a tie, the Chair(s) shall cast an additional deciding vote.
- Voting is by a show of hands, unless a secret ballot is requested by any voting member.

5.3. Electronic Voting

- If required, the Committee may hold a vote electronically on a matter, with a defined discussion period, prior to the vote being closed.
- Electronic voting can be authorized by the Chair(s) or the BSO and conducted by the Chair(s), the BSO or the Secretary.
- The motion and rationale for the necessity of an electronic vote must be communicated to the Committee.
- Every attempt shall be made to restrict electronic voting to time-sensitive issues that require approval or documents that require adoption. In all instances, electronic voting should be limited to issues that have already been subject to discussion at a meeting.
- Members must have access to the other members' email addresses to have the opportunity for discussion and an open vote, by using the "Reply All" option.
- Members must be given a minimum of two (2) working days to submit their vote electronically. The initial period can be for discussion purposes, after which the

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discussion will be closed and a vote requested. Discussion and votes must be emailed to all the Members.

- If a majority of the members have submitted their vote within the voting period, the motion is either adopted or rejected.
- The first member to submit his/her vote in favor of the motion will be considered the mover and the second member to submit his/her vote in favor of the motion the seconder.
- Members who do not respond will be considered as having abstained.
- The Chair(s), BSO or Secretary of the Committee will advise all the members of the outcome of the vote.
- Electronic voting results will be documented in the minutes of the subsequent regular meeting.

6. Rules of Order

For any matters not otherwise covered in these Terms of Reference, the Committee shall operate under procedure as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

7. Committee Chair

- There will be one (1) Chair or a maximum of two (2) Chairs of the Committee appointed by the Vice-President, Services and Sustainability.
- The term of office of the Chair(s) is two (2) years. Terms may be renewed.
- The Chair(s) is (are) a voting member(s) of the Committee.
- Should the Chair(s) be absent or unable to act, the Committee will designate a person from amongst the voting members to chair the meeting.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1. Members

Committee members are responsible for:

- Attending all meetings, and when unavailable, informing the Secretary
- Participating in all activities of the Committee, and chair sub-committees, when requested

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- Participating in the development of biosafety policies, procedures and training
- Attending safety courses or seminars made available to Committee members
- Being familiar with the Canadian Biosafety Standard (CBS), the Canadian Biosafety Handbook (CBH), the Human Pathogens and Toxin Act and Regulations and the University's safety policies
- Being familiar with the Committee's Terms of Reference
- Promoting the University's safety policies and procedures
- Participating in workplace inspections and investigations involving Biological Materials
- Reviewing biosafety safety program reports
- Reviewing University projects conducted by faculty, staff, students and/or visiting scientists which involve the use of Biological Material classified as Risk Group 2 (as defined in the CBS)
- Reviewing and approving the University's Biosafety Manual
- Reviewing incidents/accidents and exposures involving Biological Materials and making recommendations for changes to policies, procedures and/or training requirements to avoid reoccurrence

8.2. Chair(s)

The Chair(s) is (are) responsible for:

- Planning meetings with the assistance of the BSO and the Secretary
- Presiding over all committee meetings
- Ensuring that all agenda items are addressed and that each member wishing to speak is heard
- Reviewing and signing the minutes of the meeting he/she chaired
- Encouraging active participation from members
- Ensuring that the Committee and its members carry out their duties
- Ensuring that the Committee's recommendations are followed-up
- Meeting annually with the Chairs of the University Radiation Safety Committee and the University Hazardous Materials Safety Committee, and the Vice-President, Services and Sustainability to communicate health and safety concerns

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8.3. Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for:

- Informing members of the times and locations of meetings
- Distributing meeting agendas, minutes and documentation
- Distributing agendas at least five (5) working days prior to regular meetings
- Taking meeting minutes
- Distributing meeting minutes at least ten (10) working days prior to regular meetings
- Keeping records of all correspondence, documents and information
- Gathering information, as required by the Committee

8.4. Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)

EHS is responsible for:

- Providing administrative support to the Committee, including fulfilling the functions of Secretary
- Providing the Committee with reports on injuries, occupational disease and near-misses, work refusals, safety training, inspections and non-compliance issues related to the biosafety program
- Preparing an annual report of the activities of the Committee

9. Meetings

9.1. Regular meetings

- There shall be at least three (3) regular meetings per year.
- Meetings are held on University premises.
- Notification of cancellation of a regular meeting must be announced by 3:00 p.m., one (1) working day prior to the meeting.

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9.2. Special Meetings

- A special meeting will be called if three members petition the Chair(s) in writing, by the Chair, or by the Director of Environmental Health and Safety.
- Members must be notified three (3) working days prior to the scheduled date of a special meeting.
- Special meetings may be called following a serious injury or incident involving Biological Materials, within the 24 hours following their occurrence, or to address urgent issues involving Biological Materials.
- A notice of a special meeting shall go out to the members via email.
- There must be quorum for a special meeting to take place.

9.3. Agenda

- Agendas are prepared at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the regular meeting.
- Any member can request an item be added to the agenda.
- The request to add an item to the agenda should be submitted to the Secretary at least twelve (12) working days prior to the regular meeting.
- Additional items can be added to the agenda at the meeting, subject to approval by the members.

9.4. Minutes

- Minutes are prepared by the Secretary.
- Minutes are signed by the Secretary and the Chair(s) that presided over the meeting, after their adoption at the next regular meeting of the Committee.

10. Record Keeping

EHS shall maintain the records of the Committee in accordance with the University's records retention rules. Members of the University Community can request copies of committee documents by submitting a request to the Secretary.

11. Sub-Committees

- The Committee shall establish task forces and sub-committees as it deems necessary.

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- Membership on task forces and sub-committees can be drawn from members and non-members appointed by the Committee.
- The Chair(s) of the sub-committee must be a member of the Committee.

12. Modifications to the Terms of Reference

- The Terms of Reference are reviewed at least every three (3) years.
- Modifications deemed necessary throughout the year can be made at any time.
- Proposals for changes to the Terms of Reference must be approved by the Committee by a two-thirds majority of members present. The proposed changes must be announced in the agenda.
- Committee approved changes to the Terms of Reference must be submitted to the Vice-President, Services and Sustainability for approval.