



**THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE  
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Introduction**

The University of British Columbia Biosafety Committee is charged by the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, as the Human Pathogen & Toxin license holder 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, the 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, prions 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 & Regulations, the Canadian Biosafety Standards, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, the Canadian Biosafety Guidelines, the Novel Substances Notification Regulations (Organisms), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Acts and Standards, Federal and Provincial Environmental Acts and Standards for Invasive Species, and WorkSafe BC's Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, and the National Institutes of Health's Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules", where applicable for US-funded studies. These are requirements regardless of the research funding source.

The UBC Biosafety Committee, in conjunction with the Department of Safety & Risk 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.

**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, monitors and approves research occurring under the UBC Human Pathogens and Toxins License as per UBC Policy SC1 - Occupational and Research Health and Safety Policy (Health and Safety Policy).

**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 & 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 Innovation of the University of British Columbia.

The Committee 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 Safety & Risk 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 biosafety experts 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 Management Systems Advisory Committee, The Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committees, the UBC Advisory Committee on Chemical Safety, Radiation Safety Committee, Clinical Research Ethics Boards, and the Animal Care Committee.

**Membership and Committee Administration**

All positions, excluding ex officio, on the Committee are held for a term of three years and may be renewed for an additional term, to a total of six years.

The Committee Chair will be appointed by the Vice-President, Research and Innovation for two years and may be appointed for an additional two terms to a total of six years.

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

- Chair
- A minimum of six faculty members, some with competency in more than one area, representing:
  - o Expertise in the areas of Medicine
  - o Expertise in the areas of Science
  - o Expertise in the areas of Biotechnology
  - o Expertise in the areas of Medical Microbiology or Infectious Diseases
  - o Expertise in the areas of Biodiversity or Ecology
- A representative of each Hospital Affiliated Research Institute
- A representative from BC Cancer Research Centre
- A representative from UBC Okanagan Campus
- Representative(s) of other applicable disciplines, as needed
- Ex officio members
- University Veterinarian, Animal Care Services
- Director, Occupational & Research Health and Safety
- Director, Office of VP Research and Innovation
- UBC RMS Biological and Radiation Safety Advisor (Officer)
- Manager, Biosafety Committee

### **Reporting Structure**

The Biosafety Committee reports to the Vice-President Research and Innovation.

### **Meetings**

The Biosafety Committee will meet no fewer than two 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, is filed within the Office of the Biosafety Committee.

### **Terms of Reference Review**

The Biosafety Committee's terms of reference shall be periodically reviewed and amended by the University, as may be required.

### **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.