UNIVERSITY BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION

Sub-Committee of Research Committee *2022/0000504*
Last amended: 05/2022 (07/06/2022)

ROLE

1. The University Biosafety Committee advises Griffith University on policies, procedures and compliance related to Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), Security Sensitive Biological Agents (SSBAs), materials regulated by biosecurity legislation (approved arrangements), and other high risk biological materials (Risk Group 3 and Risk Group 4 microorganisms, prions, and any additional biological materials listed in the *Schedule of High Risk Biological Materials Monitored by the University Biosafety Committee*). The UBC performs the functions of an Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) as outlined in the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's (OGTR) Guidelines for Accreditation of Organisations (August 2012), and in accordance with the Commonwealth Gene Technology Act 2000, Commonwealth Gene Technology Regulations 2001), Gene Technology (Queensland) Act 2016, and performs, if required, the functions of a Management Committee as outlined in the Security Sensitive Biological Agent (SSBA) Standards (March 2013), and in accordance with the Biosecurity Act 2015, National Health Security Act 2007, National Health Security Regulations 2018, and the SSBA Guidelines (August 2014). The Committee also assists and advises individuals within Griffith University to comply with including compliance with the *Queensland Biotechnology Code of Ethics,* the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)*, and the *Griffith University Responsible Conduct of Research policy* as they relate to research with such biological materials.
2. In undertaking its role, the UBC contributes to the University meeting the requirements of the following Domains and/or Standards within the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (HESF 2021):
    (a) Domain 4 – Research and Research Training
    (b) Domain Standard 5.2 – Academic and Research Integrity

INTERPRETATION

3. In the constitution, references to academic elements and academic management positions shall be as defined in *Structure and Governance of Academic Groups of the University.*
4. Any reference to "the Committee" means the University Biosafety Committee.
5. Any reference to "the Regulator" means the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR).
6. Any reference to "the *Schedule*" means the *Schedule of High Risk Biological Materials Monitored by the University Biosafety Committee*.
7. "Risk Group 3" and "Risk Group 4" microorganisms are as defined in the *Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 2243.3:2010 Safety in laboratories - Microbiological safety and containment.*
8. "Tier 1" and "Tier 2" agents are as defined by the *List of Security Sensitive Biological Agents*, published on the Department of Health website.

FUNCTIONS

9. The University Biosafety Committee shall:

(i) contribute to the development of Griffith University policies and procedures related to GMOs, SSBAs, materials regulated by biosecurity legislation, and other biological materials;

(a) perform the functions of an Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) as outlined in the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's *Guidelines for Accreditation of Organisations (2012)*, and in accordance with the *Commonwealth Gene Technology Act 2000*, *Commonwealth Gene Technology Regulations 2001*, *Gene Technology Act 2016 – Queensland*, and *Gene Technology Regulation 2002 – Queensland*, including: assisting Griffith University staff and students to correctly identify dealings with a GMO, and conditions applicable to those dealings;

(b) considering proposals prepared by Griffith University staff and students for exempt dealings with GMOs, notifiable low risk dealings (NLRDs) and dealings with GMOs requiring licences, in accordance with the legislation (proposals relating to NLRDs and exempt dealings will normally be assessed between meetings by a technical review panel composed of a sub-set of the UBC membership with the necessary collective scientific and technical expertise to appropriately assess the dealing – recommendations will be considered for approval at the next meeting of the Committee);

(c) providing advice to the Regulator on Griffith University applications for licences;

(d) providing advice to Griffith University with regards to compliance for NLRDs and with licence conditions, training requirements, and reportable events;

(e) inspecting Griffith University's containment facilities, against the Regulator's requirements for containment, at least once per year;

(f) inspecting new Griffith University physical containment facilities for which certification from the Regulator is sought;

(g) maintaining records and providing an annual report on dealings with GMOs, including the Committee's assessment of NLRD proposals, and facility inspections, in accordance with the legislation, to Research Committee via the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research); and

(h) performing the functions of an IBC (as outlined in the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's *Guidelines for Accreditation of Organisations (August 2012)*, and in accordance with the *Commonwealth Gene Technology Act 2000*, *Commonwealth Gene Technology Regulations 2001*, *Gene Technology Act 2016 – Queensland*, and *Gene Technology Regulation 2002 – Queensland*) for other institutions on a commercial basis from time to time, if appropriate (and subject to compliance with the *Consultancy and Commercial Research Policy*);

(ii) perform, if required, the functions of a Management Committee as outlined in the *Security Sensitive Biological Agent (SSBA) Standards (March 2013)*, and in accordance with the *National Health Security Act 2007*, *National Health Security Regulations 2018*, and the *SSBA Guidelines (August 2014)*, including:

(a) reviewing and approving, where appropriate, protocols and risk assessments for work involving SSBAs;

(b) reviewing information relating to significant incidents, non-compliance, data trends, associated local/entity actions and associated communication needs;

(c) ensuring biosecurity issues are formally recorded; actions allocated, tracked and closed out effectively; and internal inspection reports are reviewed;

(d) advising Griffith University staff and students on reportable events under the *National Health Security Act 2007* and *National Health Security Regulations 2018*;

(e) reviewing, at least annually for Tier 2 agents and at least six-monthly for Tier 1 agents, all SSBA-related activities, in accordance with *SSBA Guidelines*; and

(f) advising Griffith University on the authorisation of persons to handle SSBAs, access the facilities where SSBAs are handled, or access sensitive information related to SSBAs unescorted or unsupervised; and on the approval of persons who need to handle SSBAs , access the facilities where SSBAs are handled, and/or access sensitive information related to SSBAs either under escort or under supervision;

(iii) monitor and advise Griffith University on matters regulated by biosecurity legislation, including:

(a) reviewing applications for import permits related to Approved Arrangements and applications for facility certifications (applications will normally be assessed between meetings by a technical review panel composed of a sub-set of the UBC membership – recommendations will be ratified by the Chair of the UBC as required, and noted at the next meeting of the Committee);

(b) advising on compliance with regulatory requirements;

(c) undertaking internal audits of regulated practices, as appropriate;

(d) monitoring the outcomes of external audits; and

(e) maintaining records related to compliance requirements;

(iv) monitor and advise Griffith University on activities using biological materials (such as Risk Group 3 and Risk Group 4 microorganisms, as defined in the *Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 2243.3:2010 Safety in laboratories - Microbiological safety and containment,* prions, and any additional biological materials listed in the *Schedule of High Risk Biological Materials Monitored by the University Biosafety Committee*), including:

(a) reviewing and approving, where appropriate, internal project applications for activities using Risk Group 3 and Risk Group 4 microorganisms, prions, and any additional biological materials listed in the *Schedule* ;

(b) advising on compliance with the requirements set out for physical containment facilities used for activities involving Risk Group 3 and Risk Group 4 microorganisms, prions, and any additional biological materials listed in the *Schedule*;

(c) undertaking audits of physical containment facilities used for activities involving Risk Group 3 and Risk Group 4 microorganisms, prions, and any additional biological materials listed in the *Schedule*, as appropriate; and

(d) reviewing information relating to significant incidents resulting from activities using high risk biological materials (Risk Group 3 and Risk Group 4 microorganisms, prions, and any additional biological materials listed in the *Schedule);*

(v) maintain a record of proposals and projects considered by the Committee;

(vi) advise Griffith University on reported potential breaches in compliance with legislation and regulations related to GMOs, SSBAs, materials regulated by biosecurity legislation, and other biological materials (such as Risk Group 3 and Risk Group 4 microorganisms, prions, and any additional biological materials listed in the

Schedule), and, if appropriate, order a temporary cessation of related activities while investigating the potential breach;

(vii) monitor and advise Griffith University on any commercialisation agreements related to GMOs, SSBAs, materials regulated by biosecurity legislation, and other biological materials (such as Risk Group 3 and Risk Group 4 microorganisms, prions, and any additional biological materials listed in the *Schedule*); and

(viii) assist in the preparation of compliance and other reports to external agencies.

MEMBERSHIP

10. To comply with legislation, the University Biosafety Committee's membership must collectively possess the scientific and technical expertise required to assess and advise on the dealings likely to be put before it. The Committee should encompass representation from the Health and Sciences Group Health and Safety Committees. The members of the Committee shall be:

(i) The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) or nominee as Chair *ex officio*;

(ii) The Senior Manager, Health and Safety *ex officio*;

(iii) Three academic representatives from the Griffith Sciences Academic Group with appropriate expertise, nominated by the Griffith Sciences Group PVC and approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research);

(iv) Three academic representatives from the Health Academic Group with appropriate expertise, nominated by the Health Group PVC and approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research);

(v) One representative from the Institute for Glycomics, nominated by the Director and approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research);

(vi) The Manager, Biosciences Resources Facility *ex officio*;

(vii) The Safety Specialist (Biosafety/Biosecurity) *ex officio*;

(viii) One representative from Griffith Health – Technical Services, nominated by the Health Group PVC and approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research);

(ix) One representative from Griffith Sciences – Technical Services, nominated by the Griffith Sciences Group PVC and approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research);

(x) One representative from Campus Life who has appropriate engineering expertise, nominated by the Director, Campus Life and approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research);

(xi) At least one, but preferably two or three, external independent persons with appropriate expertise, specifically for IBC-related functions, as outlined in the legislation. External members will be appointed by Research Committee but can be nominated by any interested persons;

(xii) Griffith University's Responsible Officer and Deputy Responsible Officer for each facility registered with the Commonwealth Department of Health, in accordance with the *SSBA Regulatory Scheme*.

The Committee shall appoint a Deputy Chair at the first meeting of each year.

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RIGHTS OF AUDIENCE AND DEBATE

11. The following persons shall have rights of audience and debate:

    (i) Deputy Director, Research Policy, Office for Research or nominee; and

    (ii) Director, Griffith Enterprise or nominee.

TERMS OF OFFICE

12. All members, other than *ex officio* members, shall normally serve for a period of two years up to 31 December of the relevant anniversary year, and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

INVITATION TO ATTEND

13. The Committee may invite the attendance and participation at its meetings of such persons who, by reason of their special expertise or experience, can assist the Committee's deliberations on any particular matter or matters. However, before inviting such persons, the Committee will balance the need for expertise versus the need to restrict the number of persons with knowledge about SSBAs, as outlined in the *Security Sensitive Biological Agent (SSBA) Standards*.

SECRETARY

14. The Director, Office for Research, will appoint a Secretary to the Committee who will have rights of audience and debate.

INDEMNITY OF MEMBERS

15. Griffith University will indemnify members as required by, and in accordance with, the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's *Guidelines for Accreditation of Organisations (2012)*.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

16. Members are required to identify any conflict of interest, including family or other personal relationship/s as outlined in the University policies on Conflict of Interest and Personal Relationships in the Workplace, which may exist in respect of any of the items on the agenda. When an interest has been declared, the Chair may resolve that the member:

    (a) leaves the meeting while the item of business is discussed; or

    (b) participates in the discussion but withdraw from the meeting before the vote and/or decision; or

    (c) stays but does not participate in either the debate or vote/decision; or

    (d) stays with full debating and voting/decision rights.

    All declarations of interest will be recorded in the minutes, together with any ensuing action.

QUORUM

17. The quorum of the Committee shall be the whole number next above one-half of those persons who are Committee members.

18. When the Committee is undertaking the functions of the IBC, in accordance with the *Commonwealth Gene Technology Act 2000*, *Commonwealth Gene Technology Regulations 2001*, *Gene Technology Act 2016 – Queensland*, *Gene Technology Regulation 2002 – Queensland*, and the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's *Guidelines for Accreditation of Organisations (2012),* an external member must be present and the members present must collectively possess the scientific and technical expertise required to assess and advise on the dealings being considered.

19. When the Committee is undertaking the functions of the Management Committee, in accordance with the *Security Sensitive Biological Agent (SSBA) Standards (March 2013)*, the *National Health Security Act 2007*, *National Health Security Regulations 2018*, and the *SSBA Guidelines (August 2014),* the relevant Responsible Officer or Deputy Responsible Officer must be present.

MEETINGS

20. The Committee will meet as required and normally four times annually.

WORK PLAN

21. The Committee will provide an annual Work Plan to Research Committee for review and endorsement prior to the Plan's scheduled commencement.

REPORTING

22. The UBC will report its activities to the Research Committee. The UBC will provide an annual report to the Research Committee.