

# Biosafety Committee Terms of Reference

Office of the Chief Risk Officer

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**Version Control Table**

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Reviewed by</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Change Summary</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	OCRO	June 2022	New	N/A
1.1	OCRO	Sept 2023	update	Final

## Purpose

The purpose of the Biosafety Committee (BSC) is to ensure that:

- The University of Ottawa (herein referred to as 'uOttawa') has in place an appropriate Biosafety Program providing users with the required knowledge and training so that they may safely perform their duties and biohazardous materials are safely transported, stored, used and disposed.
- Biohazardous materials and management of bio-related risks associated with facilities and practices on the campuses of uOttawa, are used with proper consideration for the health and safety of researchers, students, staff, volunteers, visitors, public and protection of the environment.
- Practices will be in conformity with all provincial and federal biosafety-related legislation, regulations or standards.

## Scope

The Biosafety Committee reports to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The Biosafety Committee is established by the University to:

- Oversee the Program as managed by the Office of the Chief Risk Officer (OCRO), provide direction and recommend changes and act as the decision-maker on behalf of uOttawa in areas pertaining to biohazardous materials.
- Develop and recommend to the ELT and OCRO, policies, procedures, standards, guidelines and programs to establish and maintain compliance with federal and provincial regulations and guidelines and to ensure the safe purchase or acquisition, use, storage, handling, transfer and disposal of biohazardous materials.
- Authorize OCRO to issue and/or renew certificates with or without conditions to ensure compliance with federal, provincial and University regulations, guidelines and the Biosafety Program.
- At the request of the Chief Risk Officer or its delegate, review laboratory protocols or certificate requests of an unusual, particularly hazardous, or complex nature and make an appropriate recommendation.
- Authorize OCRO to revoke, suspend, or amend certificates upon the recommendation of the Assistant Director, Environmental, Radiation and Biosafety, as necessary to ensure compliance with federal, provincial and University regulations, guidelines and the Biosafety Program. Such an order must be complied with immediately and will stand while under dispute and pending reconsideration by the Committee.
- Re-consider certificate orders issued by OCRO that are under dispute. Upon such reconsideration, the Committee may confirm, modify, set aside the Certificate order and may require whatever actions it deems necessary, including temporarily or permanently revoking the Certificate, imposing conditions that must be met prior to the recommencement of use or imposing new conditions on the use.
- Review reports from OCRO concerning any incidents involving biohazardous materials and recommend preventative measures to OCRO and to the ELT, if deemed necessary.

- Review results of external and internal inspections. Provide recommendations to OCRO and the ELT, if deemed necessary, to resolve gaps identified or identify any policy changes required.
- Review and, at its discretion, approve annual reports submitted by OCRO to regulatory agencies.
- Advise the University through the ELT on any issue relating to the Biosafety Program, including any need for additional resources to establish, maintain or improve the Biosafety Program.
- Create ad-hoc committees, as required, consisting of members of the Biosafety Committee and/or other members of the University's community, as deemed appropriate.
- Seek advice and additional expertise as needed to fulfill its role.

## Membership

The Biosafety Committee is composed of the Chair, Dean/Director Members, Researcher Members, Resource Members and Additional Members (collectively referred to as "Members") as outlined below.

### Chair

- Vice-President (Research and Innovation) or Associate Vice President (Research support and Infrastructure) as delegate
- **Dean/Director Members:**
  - Dean, Faculty of Medicine, or Vice-Dean, Research as delegated by the Dean
  - Dean, Faculty of Science, or Vice-Dean Research and Infrastructure as delegated by the Dean
  - Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, or Vice-Dean, Research as delegated by the Dean
  - Dean, Faculty of Engineering, or Vice-Dean, Research as delegated by the Dean
- **Researcher Members are researchers who hold certificates and who are appointed by the Chair, upon nomination by the Dean of the Faculty concerned:**
  - 2 Member(s) who represent the Faculty of Medicine
  - 1 Member(s) who represent the Faculty of Science
  - 1 Member(s) who represent the Faculty of Health Sciences
  - 1 Member(s) who represent the Faculty of Engineering
- **Resource Members (or delegates):**
  - Assistant Director, Enviro, Rad & Bio, Office of the Chief Risk Officer.
  - Biosafety Officer/Risk Specialist (PHAC Signing Authority), Office of the Chief Risk Officer.
- **Resource Members as required:**
  - Chief Risk Officer, Office of the Chief Risk Officer.
  - Manager, Health, Safety and Risk Management Office - Alta Vista Campus.
  - Director, Animal Care and Veterinary Services.

- Directors: Director of Operations, Research Management Services (RMS), Assistant Director, Innovation support Services (ISS), Assistant Director, Strategic Development Initiatives (SDI) and Director, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity.
  - Director, Health and Wellness.
  - Director, Legal Counsel.
  - Medical Advisor, who may be a physician nominated by the Faculty of Medicine.
- Additional Members are those individuals who are appointed as a Member at the discretion of the Vice-President (Research and Innovation) and who may be external to the University. There may be no more than two (2) Additional Members.
- **Ex-Officio Members**
    - Individuals who are appointed as representatives of the hospital-based research institutes (Directors or delegates from; University of Ottawa Heart Institute, Ottawa Health Research Institute, Children`s Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute, Institute of Mental Health Research and Elisabeth Bruyere Research Institute).

## Membership Term

- The term of membership of the Chair, the Dean/Director Members (except for the member selected from the Vice Dean of Sciences, Health Sciences or Engineering) and the Resource Members is an indefinite term.
- The term of membership of the member selected from the Vice Dean of Sciences, Health Sciences or Engineering Members is a term of up to two (2) years.
- The term of membership of the Researcher Members and the Additional Members is a term of up to three (3) years, which may be renewed or extended once at the discretion of the Vice-President (Research).

## Responsibilities and Authority

### Authority of Vice President (Research and Innovation)

- The Vice President (Research and Innovation) will provide resources to support the Biosafety Program implementation, improvement when needed, and achieve and maintain compliance.

### Authority of Vice Dean of Research or Equivalent Position

- The Vice Dean or Associate Dean members act as representatives of their Dean and Faculty and must report in writing to their Deans. The Dean can delegate the authority and provide necessary resources to the VP Research and Innovation or Associate Dean members as required to enable the Committee to meet its mandate and transact its business as it pertains to biosafety and will approve/provide appropriate resourcing to accomplish these actions.

## Responsibilities of the Chairperson

- Represents the Office of the VP Research and Innovation.
- Provides leadership and direction to members toward achieving Committee objectives.
- Verifies that plans and actions decided on by the Committee are implemented.
- Assists the Office of the Chief Risk Officer in the oversight of the Biosafety Program by representing the Committee as spokesperson and providing financial and/or human resources support when required.
- Takes urgent action on behalf of the Committee in emergency situations and matters that require immediate attention in support of the Office of the Chief Risk Officer.
- Submits reports to the Applicant Authority as required.
- Ensures a biennial (every two (2) years) review and ratification of the Terms of Reference by the Committee.

## Responsibilities of the Office of the Chief Risk Officer

- The Office of the Chief Risk Officer, under the oversight of the Biosafety Committee, administers and provides subject matter expert support in the implementation of the Biosafety Program and compliance with federal and provincial regulations, as well as University policies pertaining to the acquisition, use, storage, handling, transfer and disposal of biohazardous and potentially biohazardous materials. The Office of the Chief Risk Officer also advises and coordinates with other organizational units on matters relating to the acquisition and/or purchase, use, storage, handling, transfer and disposal of biohazardous and potentially biohazardous materials.
- For the purpose of the Terms of Reference, the Biosafety program includes:
  - Management of biohazardous materials safety and security programs, including training programs.
  - Review and approval of applications, with appropriate conditions, relating to the use of biohazardous materials.
  - Issuance, amendment or suspension of Biohazardous Material Use Certificates, and authorizing the use of Biohazardous Materials (“Certificates”).
  - Management of procedures and processes relating to the purchase or acquisition transportation, storage, handling, use, transfer and disposal of biohazardous and potentially biohazardous materials, including waste materials.
  - Recording and as required, the reporting of incidents to the Biosafety Committee and regulatory agencies.
  - Biosafety inspection of laboratories and facilities.
  - Advising on biohazardous materials decontamination.
  - Execution of the audit program and provide inspection-related training both internally and to third-party personnel.
  - Monitoring the status of corrective actions or preventative measures as appropriate, and support corrective action closure as SMEs (i.e., corrective actions arising from audits).

- Review and feedback on laboratory design, renovations, installations, storage facilities, and decommissioning.
- Any other matter related to the Program under the aegis of the Office of the Chief Risk Officer.

### **Responsibilities of Members**

- Participate at meetings (80% attendance required) and work with other members on assigned issues, including subcommittees or working groups as required (note, 100% attendance is required when items on the agenda relate to the members and areas that they represent).
- Report on Committee activities to those whom they represent.
- Identify a delegate to attend and vote in his/her absence.
- Update the delegate with Committee activities as required.
- Complete actions before the next committee meeting.
- Review and comment on new and/or revised policies and procedures in a timely manner.

### **Responsibilities of Secretary**

- Prepare and provide written or e-mail notification of regular meetings three (3) weeks prior to the meeting and providing a reminder, the meeting agenda, and all written documentation at least five days prior to the meeting. This requirement may be waived by the Committee on a simple majority vote.
- Upon a request made by the Chair, send the notice of additional meetings to the members of the Biosafety Committee, the meeting agenda and the documents required for the meetings.
- Record of the minutes of the meetings and sending the draft minutes to the members of the Biosafety Committee for their approval.
- Prepare the necessary documentation relating to any action item (e.g., letters, reports, etc.) for the signature of the Chair.

### **Meetings**

- Members should meet two (2) times a year, the timing of which shall be at the call of the Chair.
- Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chair at the Chair's discretion or upon request by the Office of the Chief Risk Officer.
- The agenda, manner and conduct of the meetings of the Biosafety Committee shall be determined by the Chair and may be held in person, by video conference, by telephone conference, or by email as appropriate in the circumstances.
- The Committee shall appoint a member to act in the role of Secretary to the Committee who will be responsible for the functioning of the Committee meetings.

### **Voting**

- Dean/Director Members, Researcher Members and Additional Members of the Committee shall have the right to vote. In the event of a tie vote amongst the duly appointed voting members, the Chair shall cast the deciding vote.

- Resource Members are non-voting members of the Committee.
- Quorum shall be 50% plus one (1), of the Members eligible to vote.

### **Confidentiality**

- Members will be made aware of information that is sensitive in order to maintain confidentiality when required during a meeting, review, discussion, investigation or other committee activities.
- Each committee member shall treat with appropriate confidentiality, during and after the completion of their term of office, all information relating to a person of which he or she acquires knowledge in connection with his engagement as committee member, as well as information on biohazards (biosecurity).
- Each committee member shall sign a confidentiality statement.

### **Amendments**

- Any amendments to these terms of reference must be made in writing and approved by resolution of the ELT.

### **Approval**

- Upon recommendation by the VP Research and Innovation, who has signing authority for the University with respect to Biosafety matters, these terms of reference for the Biosafety Committee were approved by the Committee on November 3, 2023.