

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AT KINGSTON
UNIVERSITY BIOHAZARDS COMMITTEE

Preamble

Queen's University has had a formal biosafety program since 1978 when the Biohazards Committee was formed to ensure that the University met its obligations for the proper handling of recombinant DNA, and as well for the handling of animal viruses and animal cells in tissue culture. The work overseen by the Committee has evolved to include other biohazardous materials that may be hazardous to people, animals, or the environment (for example plant pathogens as regulated under the CFIA Containment Standards for Facilities Handling Plant Pests). One focus is on materials that are regulated by Federal Agencies, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). In addition, to meet the University's obligations under the general duty provisions of the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations, the Committee also oversees work with biological material that is not covered by Federal legislation but which may be hazardous to people (for example human tissue).

In December 2015 the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) Human Pathogens and Toxins Regulations and the Canadian Biosafety Standards, 2nd Edition (CBS), under the Human Pathogens and Toxins Act, came fully into force. These documents replaced the previous Human Pathogens Import Regulations and the PHAC Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines. The new regulations were consistent with the previous regulations and extended them to include domestically acquired human pathogens. The CBS also applies to terrestrial animal pathogens regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) under the Health of Animals Regulations, replacing the former Terrestrial animal pathogens: Containment Standards for Veterinary Facilities 1st Edition, 1996, and Prions: Containment Standards for Laboratories, Animal Facilities and Post Mortem Rooms Handling Prion Disease Agents, 1st Edition, 2005.

In December 2015, the University applied for a PHAC Risk Group 2 Human Pathogens and Toxins Licence and a CFIA Risk Group 2 Terrestrial Animal Pathogen Permit. The V.P. Finance and Administration signed as the responsible official (Licence Holder), and the application was based on our existing Biosafety Program. The permit was issued February 11, 2016 subject to

the conditions annexed thereto. It is a permit for work with human or terrestrial animal pathogens (that are not Foreign Animal Diseases, emerging Diseases, or bee diseases), and toxins produced by these pathogens, in Containment Level 2 laboratory work areas, small animal zones, large animal zones, and post mortem rooms. The following are not allowed: Security Sensitive Biological Toxins over the trigger quantity, Security Sensitive Biological Agents, prions, Risk Group 3 and Risk Group 4 pathogens, and Schedule 5 organisms (currently small pox). The Canadian Biosafety Standards and the terms of our PHAC Licence and CFIA Permit apply, whether or not the work is externally funded and whether or not the sponsoring agency requires such certification.

The University Biohazards Committee, on behalf of the University, will determine the nature of biohazardous work in progress or proposed, accredit the facilities on an ongoing basis, assist in the design of appropriate laboratories and training of personnel, determine if there is Dual Use potential in the proposed work, and serve as an educational resource to members of the University community.

The Biohazards Committee has written policies and procedures which describe the work that it oversees and the precautions necessary for such work. These documents are maintained and made available to the University community through the Biosafety Officer in the Department of Environmental Health and Safety. Members of the University community who are contemplating work which might fall within these policies are required to contact the University Biological Safety Officer and apply for a permit from the Biohazards Committee prior to commencing such work.

1. Introduction

In July 1978, the Principal announced the formation of the University Biohazards Committee on the basis of a recommendation advanced by the previously existing Biohazards Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, through the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research. The initial statement of the Structure and Terms of Reference of the University Biohazards Committee was published in the University Gazette for July 11, 1978. The structure of the Committee has been revised from time to time as appropriate. The position of Biosafety Officer was created in 2006 to support the work of the Committee.

The University Radiation Committee and the Joint Health and Safety Committee have clearly different activities than the University Biohazard Committee.

2. Membership of the University Biohazards Committee

The committee shall consist of eight ordinary members and five ex-officio members. An individual can fulfil more than one role. Both Ex-Officio and Ordinary Members shall have voting rights:

a) Ex-Officio Members

- (i) Chair to be nominated by the Principal;
- (ii) The Director, Research Services or delegate;
- (iii) The Director, Environmental Health and Safety;
- (iv) The University Biological Safety Officer
- (v) The Director, Animal Care Services.

b) Ordinary Members

The eight ordinary members shall include at least six faculty members, as well as one person not associated with Biohazards research, preferably from outside the University. They should have the following general attributes:

- (i) Faculty members whose fields of expertise shall be such that these three areas of work are adequately covered:
 - 1) cell culture;
 - 2) recombinant DNA;
 - 3) microbiology;
- (ii) One person not associated with biohazards research, preferably from outside the University.
- (iii) One member of Queen's University staff, working in a laboratory associated with Biohazards.

Note: i) The phrase "faculty member" means a member of the faculty of the University and is not intended to be restricted to any particular Faculty within the University.

ii) The Biohazard Committee may consult experts internal or external to Queen's University when necessary to perform its duties.

c) Quorum

A minimum of five members shall normally be considered a quorum.

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d) Secretary

Administrative support will be supplied through Environmental Health and Safety.

3. Appointment

All members shall be appointed by the Principal on the advice/recommendation of the Vice-Principal (Research).

The Chair will be appointed to that position for a term to be recommended by the Principal. The other ex-officio members shall hold office for the duration of the tenure of their relevant appointments.

The eight ordinary members shall be appointed for three-year terms on a staggered basis, and shall be eligible for reappointment.

4. Reporting Channel

The Committee shall be classed as a "Principal's Committee" and shall make recommendations to the University through the Vice-Principal (Research), who will be expected to act in consultation with the Dean (Health Sciences). To avoid potential conflict of interest, the Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration) is the Licence Holder for the PHAC Licence and CFIA Permit, and as such will be informed of any relevant matters.

5. Resources

A Budget shall be provided to cover support for the responsibilities set out in 6, below, within the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Health & Safety.

Access will be provided to a legal representative for the University who can review new or revised policies and procedures that are developed by the University Biohazards Committee.

6. Responsibilities and Functions

In the course of making its recommendations to the University, the University Biohazards Committee shall be responsible for:

- a) Developing and maintaining University policies for handling biohazardous material, based on the "Canadian Biosafety Standards" produced by the Public Health Agency of Canada

in collaboration with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

- b) Serving on behalf of the University as the reviewing agency for all existing and planned work potentially involving biohazards, and acting as the certifying body concerning the Biohazard Risk Group and Containment Levels involved in the work and the adequacy of the procedures and facilities associated with the conduct of the work.
- c) Making recommendations to the University through the Vice-Principal (Research), who will be expected to consult appropriately the Dean (Health Sciences), concerning the actions to be taken on specific aspects of biohazard matters as they arise. Similarly making recommendations to the Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration) concerning matters that pertain to the PHAC Licence or CFIA Permit;
- d) Developing appropriate procedures for the handling of emergency situations relating to biohazards;
- e) Advising the University, its faculties, departments, and researchers of these policies;
- f) Providing at appropriate intervals to the University and to external agencies, as required, reports on:
 - (i) Situations and activities involving Containment Levels 1 and 2*
 - (ii) All Biohazard incidents and accidents that require reports on safety aspects;
 - (iii) Safety procedures and equipment used in various Levels of work, as a result of direct inspection by the Committee.
- *Containment levels 1 to 4 are discussed in detail in the Canadian Biosafety Standards. Level 1 is the least dangerous. Note that, in addition to the requirement for federal permits to operate level 3 or 4 containment facilities, there are currently no such facilities on Queen's University campuses.
- g) Acting as a resource body for the University and its staff to provide:
 - (i) Dissemination of up-to-date information regarding Biohazard Risk Group and Containment Levels, containment facilities, training procedures and other related matters as they arise.