**Biosafety and Radiation Safety Committee**

**Terms of Reference**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The Western Sydney University Biosafety and Radiation Safety Committee (BRSC) is responsible for the oversight of biosafety and radiation safety across the University. The BRSC also acts on behalf of the University, as the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) as required by the Gene Technology Act 2000. The BRSC is a governance committee of the University.

**2. Functions and Responsibilities**

2.1 The BRSC is constituted to:

* advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) regarding genetic manipulation, biological and radiation safety compliance and policy matters;
* minimise biological and radiation risk, and ensure compliance with the *Gene Technology Act,* *Radiation Control Act* and other relevant legislation in regards to radiation, and the *National Security Act* as they apply to the University

2.2 This will be accomplished by:

* assessing, approving, monitoring and maintaining records of teaching and research proposals associated with:

* + specimens of human or animal origin that are not certified to be pathogen free
  + infectious/potentially infectious animals (laboratory and non-laboratory)
  + microorganisms or agents classified as Risk Group 2 and above (see [AS/NZS 2243.3](https://www.saiglobal.com/online/autologin.asp))
  + infectious/potentially infectious environmental samples
  + biological toxins including biological material on the Defence Strategic Goods List
  + genetically modified organisms (includes plants, animals, microorganisms, cells and all exempt dealings)
  + security sensitive biological agents (SSBA)
  + quarantine material
  + ionising radiation sources, radioactive materials and equipment, and lasers above class 2

2.3 In addition, the committee will be responsible for:

* recommending guidelines for safe work practices and procedures when storing, using, transporting or disposing of biological and radioactive products;
* providing advice on working with biological hazards including potentially infectious agents, genetically modified organisms and/or imported biological materials from overseas;
* overseeing the certification of physical containment facilities and inspecting all certified physical containment facilities as legislatively required, or at least annually;
* maintaining records, including a register of all GMOs, regarding approved applications involving GMOs in accordance with the requirements of the Gene Technology Regulation;
* providing an annual report to the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR);
* ensuring that accidents and incidents involving GMOs and radiation are investigated and reported to the relevant Regulatory authority as required;
* recommending appropriate training for personnel using radioactive materials and apparatus, and high powered lasers;
* overseeing the personal monitoring program for individuals conducting radiation work to ensure compliance with statutory requirements, guidelines and codes of practice;
* considering other matters of radiation and biosafety that affect the University’s compliance with relevant statutory requirements, guidelines, codes of practice and University Policy;
* maintaining liaison with extramural organisations concerned with biological and radiation safety; and
* reporting annually to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

**3. Membership of the Committee**

3.1 The membership of the BRSC must have the collective technical and scientific expertise to review and assess all the matters that are likely be put to it by the organisation.

3.2 The Chair is a senior academic with appropriate expertise and previous BRSC experience.

3.3 The committee will include: a representative from Work Health and Safety (WHS); a specialist in radiation safety; a representative from Division of Finance and Resources (Infrastructure Services), and an independent member (not otherwise affiliated with the University).

3.4 In addition, four to six other staff and academic members will be appointed to the committee with expertise in:

* molecular biology, biochemistry;
* plant pathology, plant physiology, plant genetics;
* microbiology, immunology, infectious diseases;
* health sciences;
* medicine, pharmacology; and/or
* laboratory maintenance and functionality.

3.5 All appointments to the BRSC will be made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation). An appointed member shall hold office for a term of three years and upon retirement, shall be eligible for re-appointment.

3.6 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) may appoint a person to fill a casual vacancy in the membership of the Committee. The appointed individual’s term will be the same as their predecessor.

**4. Conditions of Appointment**

4.1 Members shall receive a formal notice of appointment and a guarantee that the institution accepts legal responsibility for decisions and advice from the Committee and indemnifies its members accordingly. Any mandatory training requirements will also be notified.

4.2 Members are bound by the University’s Conflict of Interest policy.

4.3 Members of the Committee shall maintain the confidentiality of applicants and their proposals, ensuring that they do not discuss or disclose details of submissions outside of meeting and review requirements, apart from discussions undertaken with the Chair/another member of the Committee or the Ethics Officer (Biosafety and Radiation). If the committee seeks advice from experts in considering a proposal, these experts are bound by the same confidentiality requirements. All general discussions within the forum of the meetings must remain confidential.

4.4 Members are not offered remuneration. However, independent members will be reimbursed for legitimate expenses incurred in attending Committee meetings or in otherwise carrying out the business of the Committee. The University has agreed to the following workload allocation for BRSC committee members.

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| --- | --- |
| Chair – 10% | Committee Member – 5% |

Researchers who wish to claim the workload allocation should discuss this with the Dean of School/Institute Director.

(Refer [University Work Plan Policy)](https://westernsydneyedu.sharepoint.com/StaffDocuments/WorkplanPolicies/2020_Work_Plan_Policies/FINAL%20-%20University%20Work%20Plan%20Policy%202020.pdf?csf=1&e=sJOPc8&cid=5668e9d1-15c6-4416-b881-dfabc9d6b370).

4.5 **Duration of Membership**

Membership of the BRSC shall be for 3 years.

4.6 Membership will lapse if a member fails to attend meetings, conduct appropriate reviews or send comments without apology or reasonable excuse.

4.7 **Resignation**

Members may resign from the BRSC at any time by advising the Chair in writing with a minimum two-month notification period. The Chair will advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) of the resignation.

4.8 On the recommendation of the BRSC Chair, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) may request a member of the BRSC to resign from the Committee.

**5. Operation of the BRSC**

5.1 **Frequency of meetings**

There are eight (8) meetings each year; one every six weeks commencing in February.

5.2 **Conflicts of Interest**

Members of the ACEC are required to declare general potential conflict of interest at the commencement of each meeting. Should a member identify a conflict of interest at any time during a meeting, this should be declared at that time.

Further information can be found in the Conflict of Interest Policy ([Policy DDS](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/policy/policy_dds)).

5.3 **Quorum**

At any meeting of the BRSC, a quorum is at least half of the committee membership. No matter relating to gene technology matters will be approved without the independent member being present or consulted.

**6. Sub-Committees**

6.1 The BRSC may establish and maintain such sub-committees as it deems necessary to effectively complete its business.

6.2 Each sub-committee established by the Committee is to be chaired by a member of the Committee.

6.3 A sub-committee shall only exercise the functions delegated by the Committee.

6.4 A sub-committee shall report as required, to the Committee.

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