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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To protect employees, students, the community and the environment from the risks which may arise in the handling of biohazardous agents, by ensuring that the elements of the biosafety program are implemented prior to work being conducted with biohazardous agents:
  - 1.1.1. An individual planning to work with biohazardous agent shall file a VIU Biosafety Authorization application with the Institutional Biosafety Committee.
  - 1.1.2. Approval shall be obtained from the Institutional Biosafety Committee prior to work commencing.
  - 1.1.3. Facilities where biohazardous agents are to be used must first be approved by the Biosafety Officer.
  - 1.1.4. The level of training must be appropriate to the VIU Biosafety Authorization and may be evaluated by the Institutional Biosafety Committee.
- 1.2. To ensure compliance with the Human Pathogens and Toxins Act and Regulations, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), the Environmental Protection Act, the National Science and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), all applicable federal and provincial regulations, regional district bylaws, and municipal bylaws respecting biohazardous materials management and disposal.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. All teaching and research projects that use Risk Group 2 (RG2) biohazardous agents (or higher), including:
  - 2.1.1. infectious biological agents: bacteria, viruses, parasites, fungi, toxins, viral vectors;
  - 2.1.2. human, simian or other animal cell cultures, tissues and bodily fluids;
  - 2.1.3.
  - 2.1.4. transgenic material which may be hazardous to humans, animals and plants and the environment: recombinant and synthetic DNA, genetically modified organisms;

2.2. All persons who work with or arrange for transportation of biohazardous material must be trained as per the Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG) Act and any other applicable international, federal or provincial regulations regarding the transport of biohazardous agents.

### 3. Program

#### 3.1. Authority

The Institutional Biosafety Committee has the authority, on behalf of the Associate Vice-President, Scholarship and Community Engagement (AVPSCE) to stop immediately any use of biohazardous agents which deviates from the original VIU Biosafety Authorization or is deemed to be in non-compliance with the applicable legislation.

#### 3.2. Responsibility

3.2.1. The day-to-day requirement to comply with safe use of biohazardous agents in research and teaching under the auspices of Vancouver Island University is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI), researcher or course instructor.

3.2.2. All lab workers using biohazardous agents must have the necessary expertise and appropriate training in accordance with the policies of VIU.

3.2.3. The acquisition of all biohazardous materials (by purchase, culture (beyond identification of the biohazardous agent) or transfer from another source) must be arranged in accordance with approved VIU protocols.

3.2.4. The disposal of all biohazardous agents must be in accordance with VIU approved and in compliance with all relevant federal, provincial and local government regulations and bylaws.

3.2.5. The Biosafety Officer, in close collaboration with the Institutional Biosafety Committee, is responsible for monitoring compliance with the *Biosafety* policy Changed for simplicity and the terms of authorization of use.

3.2.5.1. The BSO and a supervisor or member of the IBC will manage non-compliance issues as indicated in Section 2.

3.2.5.2. The BSO and the IBC may seek the advice of experts, as appropriate.

3.2.6. The Biosafety Officer maintains up-to-date records of all VIU Biosafety Authorizations, approved locations, authorized users, containment equipment, equipment certifications and personnel training.

3.2.7. The Biosafety Officer reports to the Institutional Biosafety Committee with a summary of such records.

3.2.8. The Biosafety Officer ensures that authorized users use appropriate containment facilities for the specified activities with biohazardous agents.

### 4. Consideration of Application to Use Biohazardous Agents

#### 4.1. Application for the Use of Biohazardous Agents in Research and Teaching

4.1.1. Research and teaching involving biohazardous agents must be carried out in accordance with all applicable legislation, regulations and bylaws including the Human Pathogens and Toxins Act and Regulations, the BC Worker's

Compensation Act and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, , and the Tri-Council Memorandum of Understanding relating to biohazardous research funded by the three federal granting agencies (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC).

- 4.1.2. All research, teaching or training activities using biohazardous agents shall be approved by the Institutional Biosafety Committee before use can commence. Any modification that will impact the Risk Group level and/or containment requirements of the original VIU Biosafety Authorization shall be submitted to the IBC for re-assessment and approval.

#### 4.2. Steps taken by the researcher or faculty member:

- 4.2.1. Review and understand the University's Biosafety Policy.
- 4.2.2. Ensure that:
  - (a) The physical laboratory environment meets the containment level standards required for handling Risk Group 2 biohazardous agents.
  - (b) The VIU Biosafety Procedures manual and relevant laboratory standard operating procedures are available in the lab..
  - (c) All faculty, staff and research students (undergraduate and graduate) working in the laboratory have been trained in a timely manner. The training needs to be recorded in writing.
- 4.2.3. It is recommended that the VIU Biosafety Authorization be reviewed by the Biosafety Officer prior to submission to the Institutional Biosafety Committee. The application must be submitted to the IBC before the planned commencement of the project or course in electronic format.
- 4.2.4. The Institutional Biosafety Committee will review the application. If authorization is granted a Biosafety Authorization will be issued for a five-year term (teaching courses) or as defined by the length of a specific grant (but not greater than five years).
- 4.2.5. After five years, a renewal is required for the original Biosafety Authorization.
- 4.2.6. If any modifications are required within the five-year term that will impact the Risk Group level and/or containment requirements of the original Biosafety Authorization, an amendment request shall be submitted to the IBC for approval.

#### 4.3. Steps taken by the Institutional Biosafety Committee.

- 4.3.1. The Chair of the Institutional Biosafety Committee informs the researcher or faculty member of the Institutional Biosafety Committee's decision in writing.
- 4.3.2. If the project is approved, the Biosafety Permit information will be made available to the Research and Scholarly Activity Office. The Research and Scholarly Activity Office retains signed copies of all approved applications and permits.
- 4.3.3. For funded research projects, this information is shared with the Research and Scholarly Activity Office.
- 4.3.4. All Biosafety Authorizations are shared with the Department of Health and Safety Services.

- 4.3.5. If the activity(ies) are not approved, the applicant may be asked for more information or to make modifications and may be required to submit a revised Biosafety Authorization application for review by members of the Institutional Biosafety Committee.
- 4.3.6. If these actions fail to lead to approval of the project, the Chair of the Institutional Biosafety Committee will provide the applicant with a written statement of reasons for non-approval.
- 4.3.7. The applicant may ask for a hearing before the Institutional Biosafety Committee to appeal the decision. In the event the appeal is not successful, the applicant may appeal to the AVPSCE, who may appoint an appeal committee. The decision of that committee, as ratified by the AVPSCE, would be final. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) may be called upon for information purposes; however, appeals cannot be directed to PHAC.
- 4.3.8. Due to the safety-related mandate of the Institutional Biosafety Committee, appeals will only be considered where the applicant believes there was an error or misinterpretation of facts, or that the Institutional Biosafety Committee failed to comply with the procedural requires of the *Biosafety* policy.

#### 4.4. Amendments and Renewals

- 4.4.1. Applicants must renew their Biosafety Authorization as per Sections 4.2.4 and 4.2.5. Any changes to the application must be submitted as an amendment and approved before implementation. Major changes may warrant submission of a new VIU Biosafety Authorization application.
- 4.4.2. The researcher or faculty member must notify the Institutional Biosafety Committee of any changes in biohazardous agent(s), or procedure(s) that result in a change to the Risk Group level and (or) containment requirements.
- 4.4.3. Changes in personnel will require that the IBC be informed of completed training.

#### 5. Definitions

##### **Biohazardous Agents:**

- a.** All agents (human and terrestrial animal) requiring Containment Level 2 (CL2) or higher under the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) Canadian Biosafety Standards and Handbook; and
- b.** All aquatic animal agents requiring Aquatic Containment Level 2 (AQC2) or higher under the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

**Containment:** A physical containment classification based on level of risk or hazard to be encountered while handling biohazardous material. There are four levels of physical containment based on the Health Canada Guidelines.

**Physical Containment:** Use of physical facilities and equipment and good work practices to prevent the release of organisms into the environment.

**Principal Investigator:** A faculty or supervisory staff member who is responsible for the research project.

**Faculty member:** an instructor of a course; may also include a technician involved in preparation of material needed for the delivery of the course.

**Student:** a person who is registered and attending a course.

**Student researcher:** a student performing independent research work under the supervision of a principal investigator or faculty member.

**Risk Group:** The HPTA classification of biological material based on its inherent characteristics, including pathogenicity, virulence, risk of spread, and availability of effective prophylactic or therapeutic treatments, that describes the risk to the health of individuals and the public as well as the health of animals and the animal population. Risk group 1 presents the least level of risk and Risk group 4 presents the most risk.

**Recombinant DNA:** (a) DNA molecules which are constructed outside the living cells by joining natural or synthetic DNA molecules that can replicate in a living cell or (b) DNA molecules that result from the replication of those described in (a).

## 6. Institutional Biosafety Committee Terms of Reference

### 6.1. Mandate

Vancouver Island University's Institutional Biosafety Committee is authorized to oversee the University's Biosafety Program, provide policy direction and make recommendations to the Associate Vice President, Scholarship and Community Engagement (AVPSCE), for all matters pertaining to the use of biohazardous agents in research and in teaching. The Committee reviews VIU Biosafety Authorization applications for teaching, research and testing, issues approvals, and monitors activities involving the use of biohazardous agents to confirm compliance with the standards outlined in the VIU Biosafety Policy.

### 6.2. Administrative:

- 6.2.1. Issues, renews and amends VIU Biosafety Authorizations for the use of all biohazardous agents and specifies appropriate procedural and physical laboratory containment requirements, and makes recommendations for medical surveillance, as required;
- 6.2.2. Participates in the development of the VIU institutional Biosafety Procedures Manual; Advises the AVPSCE of any perceived need for additional resources to establish, maintain, or improve the VIU Biosafety Program.

### 6.3. Compliance and Conformance:

- 6.3.1. Suspends VIU Biosafety Authorizations in cases of non-compliance or in cases of emergencies involving loss or potential loss of biological agents or containment;
- 6.3.2. Monitors certification and re-certification of CL2 laboratories;
- 6.3.3. Monitors movement of biohazardous materials within the University and for compliance with the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations when

shipping or receiving biohazardous materials;

- 6.3.4. Reviews summary results of external and internal inspections and recommends appropriate corrective action;
- 6.3.5. Reviews report of incidents involving biohazardous agents and ensures appropriate corrective action is taken to prevent reoccurrence.

#### 6.4 Lab Containment and Security

- 6.4.1 Investigates and ensures remediation of containment failure;
- 6.4.2 Ensures appropriate access control of containment level 2 (CL2) laboratories and secure storage of biohazardous agents.

#### 6.5 Advisement

- 6.5.1 Advises on policy and protocols relating to the VIU Biosafety Program to promote safe and environmentally appropriate practices, in support of compliance with regulatory and University requirements;
- 6.5.2 Reviews research and teaching Biosafety Authorization applications involving the procurement, use, storage, transfer, and disposal of biohazardous agents to assess risk, containment requirements, proposed procedures, training and expertise of personnel;
- 6.5.3 In consultation with the Biosafety Officer, reviews, recommends and acts as an expert resource for biosafety education and training programs for University faculty, researchers, staff and research students (undergraduate and graduate) and monitors training activity.

#### 6.6 Reporting

- 6.6.1 Reports to the appropriate regulatory body any substantial problems or violations of guidelines, and significant accidents or illnesses;
- 6.6.2 Provides an annual report of its activities in the previous year and compliance status to the AVPSCE.
- 6.6.3 Provides a copy of all minutes to the Research and Scholarly Activities Office.

#### 6.7 Membership

- 6.7.1 All members are appointed by the AVPSCE on the recommendation of the Dean, Faculty of Science and Dean, Health and Human Services. Initial membership will be staggered, with half of the members appointed for two-year terms and the remaining members appointed for three-year terms. Subsequent appointments will be for three-year renewable terms.
- 6.7.2 When deemed necessary for specific expertise *ad hoc* consultants will be brought in, such as a veterinarian.
- 6.7.3 The committee membership shall consist of:
  - a) Two to four faculty members from key department(s) where faculty members hold or plan to hold Biosafety Authorizations.
  - b) One non-instructional faculty member representing laboratory technical staff;

- c) The Biosafety Officer;
- d) Health and Safety Services Advisor (non-voting);
- e) Dean, Science and Technology or Health and Human Services (non-voting).

#### 6.8 Chair

- 6.8.1 The chair shall be a faculty member, nominated and elected by the members for a three year term
- 6.8.2 A co-chair will also be elected and will carry out the duties of the chair when the chair is not available;
- 6.8.3 The chair does not normally vote, except to break a tie.

#### 6.9 Quorum

- 6.9.1 For voting purposes, at least three voting members must be present.
- 6.9.2 All duly appointed members have voting privileges.

#### 6.10 Recording Secretary

The Office of Research and Scholarly Activities, the Faculty of Science and Technology or the Faculty of Health and Human Services shall provide an individual to act as recording secretary. The recording secretary shall be responsible for:

- 6.10.1 Issuing notices of meetings after consultation with the chair;
- 6.10.2 Recording minutes of the meetings and related correspondence;
- 6.10.3 Circulating meeting minutes to the members of the IBC and the AVPSCE;  
and
- 6.10.4 Maintaining all Institutional Biosafety Committee meeting documentation and correspondence.

#### 6.11 Meetings

The committee shall meet at least once per semester. The chair may call special meetings as required.

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