

# Managing Biosafety and Biosecurity

## Risks

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### 1.0 Purpose

This standard outlines the mandatory regulations and requirements for the safe and effective management of biosafety and biosecurity risks at Griffith University.

### 2.0 Scope

This standard applies to all staff, students, contractors and other relevant personnel engaged by Griffith University to undertake work, research or study.

This standard encapsulates all biological material and includes the use of the following within teaching and research activities:

- Biological materials such as plants, seeds, soil, animals, and microorganisms
- Regulated biological material
  - Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) with restricted use under The Office of Gene Technology Regulations (OGTR)
  - Goods Subject to Biosecurity Control (GSTBC) with restricted use under The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
  - Security Sensitive Biological Agents (SSBA)
  - Any other biosecurity risk material (Restricted or prohibited matter as per Qld DAFF)
- Materials derived from human and animal sources (including unscreened clinical specimens)
- Toxins from both live animals and synthesised toxins/biologicals
- Defence biologicals
- Imported or exported biologicals and buffers
- Live and dead animal tissues and associated pathogens.

## 3.0 Standard

### 3.1 Establishing a Certified Facility

Custodians of Biological materials must:

- Store and handle biological materials in a facility that is appropriate for the containment level of that material, and
- Not procure or relocate regulated biological materials without first:
  - Identifying an appropriate location for storage and use, and
  - Receiving an appropriate permit from the regulator as required, and approval from the University Biosafety Committee (UBC).

Facility Managers and Project Managers must:

- Engage the Senior Specialist, Biosafety and Biosecurity prior to designing a new certified facility, in planning and modifying any existing certified facility to facilitate regulatory approvals.

Senior Specialist, Biosafety and Biosecurity must:

- Facilitate regulatory approval requests for new facilities, modifications to existing facilities and the movement of regulated biological materials.
- Maintain a register of approvals for regulated biological material, and
- Report on any changes to the register of approvals in the quarterly UBC Biosafety Report.

### 3.2 Maintaining a Certified Facility

Custodians of Biological materials must:

- Familiarise themselves with the certification conditions for the facility they are working in.
- Report any hazards that have the potential to result in loss of material.
- Promptly complete action items issued through UBC audits or other internal inspections.

Facility Managers and Project Managers must:

- Liaise with the Senior Specialist, Biosafety and Biosecurity, prior to any works (maintenance or construction) within certified and support areas, and
- Meet any conditions put in place by the regulatory authority during works.

Facility Managers must:

- Maintain a preventative maintenance regime and inspection schedule for critical items, inclusive of equipment, that ensure compliance with certification conditions.
- Promptly complete action items issued through annual UBC audits or other internal inspections.
- Report any concerns with the facility to the UBC as soon as practicable.
- Retain an up-to-date list of all personnel accessing the facility.
- Provide local inductions and training appropriate to the facility and certification conditions.
- Retain an up-to-date record of all the local inductions and training for the facility.
- Ensure correct signage is present on facility doors. Signage must include:
  - A Biohazard warning,

- A OGTR and/or DAFF certification sign (as required),
- Facility practices information, and
- Facility contact details, inclusive of afterhours contact details.

Senior Specialist, Biosafety and Biosecurity must:

- Undertake annual audits for all certified and containment facilities.
- Report any notifiable incidents to the appropriate regulatory body in accordance with the regulatory timeframes for notification.
- Assess all notification of works and determine if they are appropriate to be undertaken without regulatory approval, or
- Notify the relevant regulatory authority of any works requiring notification.
- Maintain current certifications for facilities inclusive of extensions, variations, suspensions and surrendering of certifications.

### 3.3 Regulation of Biological Materials

Custodians of Biological materials must:

- Maintain an up-to-date inventory for all biological material.
- Maintain a list of standard operating procedures and provide adequate training to personnel to ensure compliance with certification conditions.
- Maintain detailed documentation when regulated material covered under a UBC dealing or regulator permit is destroyed, and
- Destroy biological material with a method approved by the relevant regulatory authority.
- Complete the Fit and Proper persons questionnaire and online training to become an accredited person when working with GSTBC.
- Document the arrival of all GSTBC on a Biosecurity Material Arrival form, inclusive of import permit details, entry number and storage location.
- Undertake a detailed risk assessment for all work involving biological material
- Destroy all biological material covered by a UBC dealing or regulator permit at project completion following the regulator guidelines and/or import permit.
- Communicate with the Senior Specialist Biosafety/Biosecurity when all above material has been destroyed.

A Risk Assessment review must be completed every two years or with any alterations to the project. The requirements for use are dependent on the regulator responsible and/or classification of biological material being obtained. For information regarding any material, contact the Senior Specialist Biosafety/Biosecurity at [ubc@griffith.edu.au](mailto:ubc@griffith.edu.au)

Facility Managers must maintain an inventory of all biological materials within their facility, updated at least annually.

### 3.4 Import, Export and Transport of Biological Materials

All personnel who work with biological material must:

- Notify the Senior Specialist, Biosafety and Biosecurity, prior to any import or movement of regulated biological material.

- Communicate with the Senior Specialist Biosafety and Biosecurity and Export Control Griffith prior to exporting any biological material.
- Familiarise themselves, and adhere to, any transportation regulatory requirements specific to the biological material being moved.
- Maintain up-to-date transport logs for all biological material.

### 3.5 Managing Biological Incidents and Emergencies

All personnel must:

- Report all biological incidents where there is:
  - Actual harm or the potential for harm to people and the environment, and
  - Any unexplained loss of biological material.
- Call Campus Support immediately in the following circumstances:
  - A significant spill of regulated biological material
  - An uncontrolled exposure to hazardous biological material
  - Loss of containment due to a plant/mechanical fault
- Refer to the Griffith University Emergency Management Plan when planning for and responding to all emergency situations.
- Refer to the Trigger Action Response Plan, relevant to the containment level, for a loss of negative pressure.

Custodians of biological materials and Facility Managers must:

- Before commencing work involving biological material, verify all necessary emergency training, processes and equipment as defined in the risk assessment is available and readily accessible if an emergency arises.
- Follow all regulatory guidance to ensure minimal possibility for a compliance breach.
- Report any potential biosafety or biosecurity breaches to the Senior Specialist Biosafety and Biosecurity and/or the UBC immediately.
- Maintain a Contingency/Emergency response plan in preparation of an emergency event.

Senior Specialist, Biosafety and Biosecurity must:

- Notify the UBC and any relevant regulatory body of any emergency events which result in the loss of containment or material.

## 4.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this standard and related standard documents, the following definitions apply:

**Accredited person** is someone who has completed in-house biosecurity training and completed the fit and proper persons questionnaire.

**Approved Arrangements** are approved and monitored by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and allow operators to manage biosecurity risks and/or perform the documentary assessment of goods in accordance with departmental requirements, using their own sites, facilities, equipment and people, and without constant supervision by the department and with occasional compliance monitoring or auditing.

**Biosafety** refers to the use of specific practices, safety equipment, and specially designed buildings to ensure that workers, the community, and the environment are protected from accidental exposure or unintentional release of infectious agents, toxins, and other biological hazards.

**Biosecurity** encompasses all measures to prevent the introduction of pathogens (bio-exclusion) and reduce the spread of pathogens (biocontainment).

**Biosafety Specialists** support the day-to-day biosafety/biosecurity management throughout the university. The Biosafety Specialists report to the UBC and the Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

**Custodians of biological material** are personnel with operational control over biological material at Griffith. This includes users of the biological material, chief investigators, and their supervisors.

**Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)** is the Australian Federal regulator for all matters relating to biosecurity.

**Emergency event** is any event, internal or external, which may compromise the security and containment of regulated biological material.

**Facility Managers** are personnel associated with the technical/research team who facilitate the maintenance and compliance of certified facilities.

**Goods Subject to Biosecurity Control (GSTBC)** are goods which require handling and storage within an Approved Arrangement facility.

**Genetically modified organism (GMO)** is a plant, animal or other organism that has been modified using gene technology and/or an organism that has inherited modified traits from a GMO.

The **Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR)** is an independent statutory office holder responsible for administering the Gene Technology Act 2000 (the Act) and corresponding state and territory laws.

**Project Managers** are personnel who facilitate and manage engineering and building projects within the University.

**Regulated facility** covers any facility which is subject to certain legislative regulations. This could be from OGTR or DAFF but may also be a licenced facility.

**Security Sensitive Biological Agents (SSBA)** are biological agents that may be developed or retained in types and quantities that could allow them to be used as weapons.

**Third-Party assessor (TPA)** is an external person who inspects and assesses a facility prior to seeking certification to determine whether it meets the necessary requirements.

**University Biosafety Committee (UBC)**, established under the Gene Technology Act 2000, advises Griffith University on policies, procedures and compliance related to Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), Security Sensitive Biological Agents (SSBAs), quarantine and biosecurity, 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), 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 material

## 5.0 Information

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Title	Managing Biosafety and Biosecurity Risks Standard
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Document number	2024/0001051
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Purpose	This standard outlines the mandatory regulations and requirements for the safe and effective management of biosafety and biosecurity risks at Griffith University.
Audience	Staff
Category	Operational
Subcategory	Safety
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	This document aligns with Sustainable Development Goal: 3: Good Health and Well-Being
Approval date	4 April 2024
Effective date	4 April 2024
Review date	4 April 2029
Policy advisor	Senior Specialist, Biosafety and Biosecurity
Approving authority	Director, Health and Safety

## 6.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	<p><i>Approved Arrangement General Policies, Version 7.3</i></p> <p><i>AS/NZS 2243.3:2022 Safety in Laboratories - Microbiological Safety and Containment - Australian Government</i></p> <p><i>AS/NZS ISO 45001: Occupational health and safety management systems – Requirements with guidance and use</i></p> <p><i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i></p> <p><i>Gene Technology Act 2000</i></p> <p><i>Gene Technology Regulations 2001</i></p> <p><i>Queensland Biotechnology Code of Ethics</i></p> <p><i>The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)</i></p> <p><i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)</i></p>
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Policy **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy**

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Procedures **University Emergency Management Plan**

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Local Protocol N/A

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Forms N/A

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