

## Biosafety Committee Terms of Reference

### 1. Background

For work involving biological hazards, Federal law requires adherence to the standards in Health Canada's document "Canadian Biosafety Standards" additionally, the Federal Granting Councils require all Canadian institutes who receive their funding to comply with these requirements for research involving biohazardous materials.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario (OHSA) requires that employers take every reasonable precaution to protect employees, students and volunteers from workplace hazards.

Lakehead University fulfills its responsibilities under the federal law, federal research councils and OHSA by the establishment of and adherence to an institutional Biosafety Committee and Biosafety Program.

### 2. Purpose

To oversee the Biosafety Program at Lakehead University.

### 3. Functions

- a. To develop a comprehensive biosafety program for all laboratories on campus in which biologically hazardous materials (biological hazards) should be handled. The biosafety program consists of a policy, terms of reference, procedures and approval process, biosafety program, biosecurity program, biannual assessments of compliance and training.
- b. To provide a consultative service with respect to risk assessment, classification and control of biological hazards that are used or are proposed to be used in research and teaching laboratories at Lakehead University.
- c. To evaluate research proposals, teaching activities and facilities handling biological hazards in order to determine required containment level (Level 1 or 2).
- d. To evaluate laboratory design and equipment in order to ascertain whether facilities are adequate for the required containment level.
- e. To make recommendations arising from **b**, **c** or **d**.
- f. To assess training needs for researchers, teachers and technical staff who work or propose to work with biological hazards.
- g. To arrange for delivery of training that meets the needs determined in **f**.
- h. To advise administration about financial support required to accomplish **a** to **g**
- i. To disseminate new biosafety and biohazard information
- j. To advise the Vice-President Research of any other matters relating to biohazard safety.



## **4. Powers**

In order to achieve its purpose and perform its functions, the committee has the power to:

- a. Approve proposals for research and teaching activities that involve the use of biological hazards and provide documentation of its approval.
- b. Approve laboratories and facilities for work with biologically hazardous materials up to containment level 2 and provide documentation of its approval.
- c. Require a researcher or a faculty member to submit a self-declaration regarding the use or proposed use of biological hazards. The declaration includes a description of the relevant qualifications and experience of the principal investigator and a description of the facilities, equipment, procedures and training proposed to be used to ensure compliance with the biosafety program and applicable standards.
- d. Enter and inspect any laboratory or any premises under the control of the University at any time.
- e. Stop any work with biologically hazardous materials that is being done without equipment or procedures as required by the biosafety program.

## **5. Composition**

The Biosafety Committee has representation from faculty, technical staff, administration and the community. Members are appointed by the Vice-President Research as follows:

Four (4) faculty members with active research and/or teaching engagement with biosafety. They should represent at least two different departments, preferably also at least two different Faculties with both campuses represented;

One (1) staff member working with biohazardous materials;

One (1) member of Physical Plant;

One (1) member representing graduate students;

One (1) veterinary professional member;

All members aforementioned are voting members.

Ex-officio members are: Laboratory and Biosafety Specialist and Director of Research Services.

One member representing faculty members may be designated by the committee as the Chair.

The Laboratory and Biosafety Specialist will act as Biosafety Officer.

One member may be designated by the committee as Secretary.

A quorum is three voting members. For binding decisions, the Chair or Biosafety Officer must be present. Decisions will be made by consensus among the Committee members.



## **6. Terms of office**

The term of office will be three (3) years, with member terms staggered. Members may serve subsequent terms.

The Chair will be a member of the committee other than the secretary selected at the April meeting. The term of the Chair will be two years.

## **7. Meetings**

Meetings will be scheduled once every quarter as required but at least once per year.

## **8. Procedures**

The Biosafety Committee will implement the following procedures:

Identification of biological hazards

Assessment and approval of facilities (see checklist) and laboratory procedures

Assessment and approval of research activities

Assessment and approval of teaching activities

Accident/incident investigation and record keeping (with Human Resources)

Overarching Risk Assessment

Training Needs Assessment

Local Risk Assessment

Biosecurity Risk Assessments

## **9. Reporting Structure**

The Biosafety Committee reports to the Vice-President Research. The Biosafety Committee will forward to the Office of Research a copy of the minutes of each committee meeting and by January 31 of each year, an annual report summarizing the activities of the year.