

University Occupational Health and Safety Information Sheet

GENETIC MODIFICATION SAFETY COMMITTEE

1. PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

It is a statutory requirement under the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations 2014 that a Genetic Modification Safety Committee (GMSC) be formed. The purpose of the GMSC is to ensure that:

- The premises where the work is to be done are registered with the Regulatory Authority (e.g. HSE for Contained Use Activities) as a centre for genetic modification;
- The approach to GM risk assessment is in accordance with the regulations and takes into account the independent advice provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification (SACGM);
- Suitable and sufficient assessments are made of the risk to human health and to the environment;
- Satisfactory decisions on appropriate containment and control measures are have been made;
- GM projects are classified appropriately according to the guidelines laid down in relevant legislation;
- Notifications to the enforcing authorities are made where required and that work only commences following consent;
- Approval is provided for work to commence where the committee is satisfied regarding classification and containment proposals for the project;
- Competent advice is provided to departments on information, instruction and training for workers performing experiments involving GM material;
- Where a GM risk assessment indicates a requirement, the names of GM workers involved in or affected by GM work have been notified to Occupational Health;
- Activities involving GMMs/GMOs are sufficiently monitored and reviewed;
- Accidents and incidents involving GM material, are considered, and to confirm that Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing and the HSE are notified (if necessary), of any significant release of genetically modified organisms which presented a hazard;
- Guidance documentation to cover work involving genetic modification is provided and kept up to date;
- The University, its staff and students cooperate and communicate efficiently on GM matters;
- The GMSC provides a report to SACSOH annually.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The GMSC is constituted to represent both management and employees with its members being representatives of all those who have access to and/or use GM material. Members have sufficient knowledge and experience to understand and recognise the risks arising from the work activities, understand the extent to which those risks are uncertain and be able to judge the adequacy of the risk assessment made under the regulations. The committee consists of:

- The GMSC Chairperson as the competent person nominated by the GMSC;
- University Biological Safety Adviser;
- Biological Procedures Unit manager;
- Four members of staff, with relevant expertise, who between them are able to represent all those who work with genetically modified material or who might otherwise be exposed to such work. To include a representative from any other organisation(s) that make use of the Biological Procedures unit for GM activities.

In attendance at the GMSC are:

- GMSC Administrator (Secretary to Committee).
- Any person by invitation of the committee.

3. ROLE AND DUTIES OF THE CHAIR OF THE GMSC

In order for the Chair of the GMSC to discharge their duties, they are assisted by the University's Biological Safety Adviser. The role of the GMSC Chair is to:

- Chair the GMSC meetings;
- Ensure that the duties of the GMSC as noted in the Terms of Reference are fulfilled;
- Be familiar with:
 - Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations 2014;
 - SACGM Compendium of Guidance;
 - Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP) "The management, design and operation of microbiological containment laboratories";
 - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH);
 - All other relevant publications.
- Ensure that all work involving GM organisms is compliant with relevant legislation and that statutory notifications are made to the HSE;
- Ensure that GM Risk Assessment approvals are dealt with in an unbiased manner.

4. ROLE AND DUTIES OF ALL GMSC MEMBERS:

The role of GMSC members is to engage with the Terms of Reference and to be familiar with the:

- Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations 2014;
- SACGM Compendium of Guidance;
- Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP) "The management, design and operation of microbiological containment laboratories";
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH);
- All other relevant publications.